

The University of Chicago

CHARACTERIZATION IN MALORY:
A COMPARISON WITH
HIS SOURCES

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1932

By
ROBERT HENRY WILSON

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to present an answer to the following question: In composing the Morte Darthur, what elements of characterization, if any, did Malory introduce? Although the problem is essentially an esthetic one, and its treatment must hence involve an irreducible personal element in the critical taste of the investigator, it has been possible to minimize this element by restricting my study to a detailed comparison between Malory and the closest ascertainable representatives of his sources. And in order that readers may judge of the validity of my conclusions, I shall present with as little comment as possible the variants which I have recorded as evidence of the extent and nature of Malory's interest in characterization.

In making such a comparison between the Morte Darthur and its sources, I am aware that even those versions of the romances which have been identified as particularly close to Malory must contain differences in detail from the manuscripts, presumably lost, which he actually used; just as they differ from other manuscripts now extant. Again, as will appear in detail in Chapter I, it seems likely that for at least some parts of his work Malory was drawing on redactions containing more extensive alterations than those of scribal transmission. It is therefore possible that any particular one of the variants between Malory and the available representatives of his sources may be the result of a change made, not by Malory, but by some transcriber or redactor of his source.

But that this difficulty does not weigh seriously against the validity of my results is evidenced by the following considerations:

(1) For over half of the Morte Darthur, there are available two or more texts of the romance which Malory was translating, so that it has been possible, after comparing the Morte Darthur with one text, to check the variants so discovered with the other or others. This procedure has decreased considerably the possibility of error from manuscript variation. Furthermore, since its operation has reduced only by very little the number of variants originally recorded, it seems probable that in matters more important than mere phraseology the manuscripts are comparatively homogeneous, and that not many more of the variants apparently original with Malory can be the result of alterations in scribal transmission (as distinct from literary redaction).

(2) Where a series of changes appears to have been made in order to bring out the same point of characterization, the question is not whether any single variant is in fact original, but whether the series as a whole can be the product of coincidence rather than of a writer's conscious purpose.

(3) Not only do variants involving characterization appear in sections of the Morte Darthur derived from every one of its sources, but frequently a series of variants relative to one character or even to a single trait of that character runs through two or more such sections. It is accordingly clear that much of the characterization cannot possibly be the work of intermediate redactors of different source romances, but must be that of someone who was rehandling all the material at once.

On the basis of these considerations, the claim appears justified that the great majority of the variants presented in

the following pages are the result of efforts at characterization by one man, a redactor of all the material in the Morte Darthur - that is to say, Malory himself.

The effects which these variants produce, and which can be grouped under the general head of characterization, are three-fold: (1) Anonymous figures are often given names, or identified with characters previously known. The crowd of unnamed persons to be found in the sources is thereby diminished materially, and the Morte Darthur is provided with a familiar group of background characters which remains relatively constant in spite of Malory's use of various sources at different times. (2) In many instances there is substituted, for adventure and accident, action motivated by human emotions. (3) A certain number of the important figures in the story are made the subjects of characterization in the more restricted sense, although even here the traits emphasized are more often than not those which serve to motivate the action of the story.

How far Malory was successful in these efforts which can be attributed to him, to what extent changes made for the purpose of characterization contribute to the total artistic effect of his work, is a delicate critical question excluded from my main investigation. Although Malory is far from transmuting the general nature of his sources - their mass of undifferentiated minor figures, their episodic adventures in which personality counts for little - his changes probably do add some merit to the narrative as it goes along, and certainly contribute a good deal to the power of the final tragedy.

But here, as in the case of his effort at compression, Malory's material would seem to have been too much for him. About the most that can be said for the results of a comparative study

of characterization is what Vinaver has said of the findings of his more general investigation of Malory's relationship to the prose Tristan:

On peut y trouver sa part d'originalité, si petite qu'elle soit, et apprécier, sinon ce qu'il a fait, du moins ce qu'il a voulu faire, c'est à dire ses idées, ses sympathies, ses procédés littéraires qui, comme on le verra, percent à travers le lourd fatras des recits aveuglément recopiés.¹

But if Malory made an effort, however little successful, to introduce characterization into the Morte Darthur, the fact is of importance in literary history, and to the evidence for the existence of this effort, and for its more precise nature, the body of this study will be devoted.

That, were it not for the previous scholarship on Malory, my work would have been impossible, goes almost without saying - and this is true even beyond the establishment of approximate sources. The summaries by Sommer² and Vinaver³ of the main variants which they have found between Malory and his sources have been invaluable, both in presenting an idea of the kind of changes I might expect to find, and in providing a check on my comparison with the sources themselves. Likewise, the appreciative study by Miss Scudder,⁴ although it makes in general no distinction between original and borrowed elements in characterization, was of considerable help at the beginning of my investigation. All three writers, naturally, cite many of the points which I use

¹ Eugène Vinaver, Le roman de Tristan et Iseut dans l'oeuvre de Thomas Malory (hereafter abbreviated as Tristan), p. 20. Fuller information on this and the following titles is to be found in the Bibliography.

² Studies on the Sources, constituting Vol. III of his edition of the Morte Darthur (hereafter abbreviated as Studies).

³ Tristan, pp. 156 ff.

⁴ Le Morte Darthur of Sir Thomas Malory: A Study of the Book and its Sources, Parts II and III.

for evidence.¹ But since none of them has touched, except in passing, the specific problem of the determination of Malory's originality in characterization by a close comparison with the sources of all parts of the Morte Darthur, I have felt free to present my study as an essentially independent piece of work, and to avoid burdening its footnotes with citations of acknowledgement or disagreement.

¹ Some miscellaneous points on the changes made by Malory in Books XVIII, XX, and XXI, are also presented by Marjorie B. Fox, "Sir Thomas Malory and the 'Piteous History of the Morte of King Arthur.'" "

CHAPTER I
MALORY AND HIS SOURCES

Although for some portions of the Morte Darthur no source is known, and in the case of others the precise version of the source romance which Malory had before him is a matter of controversy, it may be said that, in general, Malory's sources have been satisfactorily established.¹ They are, roughly, the French Vulgate (Lancelot-Grail) Cycle of prose Arthurian romances, together with modifications of it appearing in the Merlin continuation of the pseudo-Borron trilogy and in the English stanzaic Morte Arthur; and the French prose romance of Tristan. Of these sources Malory gives, in the main, a condensed paraphrase, following his originals so closely that the few differences which appear upon comparison seem likely to be his own alterations.

The following list presents the texts consulted for the present comparison, arranged according to the symbols by which, for economy of space, they will be referred to hereafter:

A - Sommer, Die Abenteuer Gawains Ywains und le Morholts mit den drei Jungfrauen, edited from MS B.N. fr. 112, fols. 17b-58b. With HM, below, this represents the pseudo-Borron Merlin.

C - Chrétien de Troyes, Le conte de la charrette, ed. Foerster. Dutch Lancelot - Jonckbloet, Roman van Lancelot, edited from the unique manuscript in the Royal Library, The Hague.

¹ For a fuller discussion of Malory's sources than need be given here, see Vinaver, Malory, Appendix II (pp. 128 ff.).

- HM - the Merlin of the unique Huth MS, Brit. Mus., Huth No. 4 (Add. 38117), ed. Gaston Paris and Jacob Ulrich.
- L - the prose Lancelot, constituting Vols. III-V of Sommer's Vulgate Version (edited from MS Brit. Mus. Add. 10292-3-4).
- l¹ - Lancelot du Lac (Paris, 1533); including Queste and Mort Artu.
- l² - Lancelot du Lac (Paris, 1488), Vol. II; including Queste and Mort Artu.
- Löseth - E. Löseth, Le roman en prose de Tristan, giving summaries of the different manuscript versions of the Tristan.
- M - Malory, Le Morte Darthur. Sommer's type facsimile of the Caxton edition of 1485.
- MA - the Mort Artu, in Vol. VI of Sommer's Vulgate Version.
- ma - Bruce, Mort Artu, edited from MS B.N. fr. 342.
- MH - the English stanzaic Morte Arthur, from the unique MS Brit. Mus. Harl. 2252; ed. Bruce.
- MT - the English alliterative Morte Arthur, from the unique MS Thornton A 1, 17, of the Lincoln Cathedral library; ed. Björkman.
- Perlesvaus - Le haut livre du Graal: Perlesvaus, ed. Nitze and Jenkins, from MS Hatton 82 of the Bodleian Library.
- Pr - the episodes of Alexander the Orphan and the tournament of Galahalt of Surluse, from the Prophecies of Merlin. Ed. Sommer, Studies, pp. 297-333, from the MSS Brit. Mus. Add. 25434 and Harl. 1629.
- Q - the Queste del Saint Graal, in Vol. VI of Sommer's Vulgate Version.
- q¹ - the Queste, MS B.N. fr. 120, fols. 522d-65d. Photostats, privately obtained.

- q² - the Queste, ed. Pauphilet, from MSS Lyons 77, B.N. fr. 344, and B.N. Nouv. Acq. 1119.
- T¹ - the prose Tristan, MS B.N. fr. 103. Rotographs, Library of Congress, M.L.A. Deposit No. 218.
- T² - the Tristan, MS B.N. fr. 334. Rotographs, Library of Congress, M.L.A. Deposit No. 220.
- T³ - the Tristan, MS B.N. fr. 99. Rotographs, Library of Congress, M.L.A. Deposit No. 188.
- T⁴ - the Lancelot interpolation in the Tristan MS Brit. Mus. Add. 5474, fols. 142c-64b; ed. Sommer, "Galahad and Perceval."
- VM - the Vulgate or "Ordinary" Merlin, constituting Vol. II of Sommer's Vulgate Version.¹

Although there exist occasional reminiscences of one source in portions of the Morte Darthur derived primarily from another,² in general the source romances are represented by successive large blocks of Malory's text. For each of these blocks I shall discuss the essential problems of source attribution, and explain my method of comparison.

Books I-IV (M 35-159)

This section is, in general, derived from the Merlin of

¹ All references to these texts, unless otherwise specified, will be by pages or folios (in l², these are indicated according to the signatures), using arabic numerals. In the case of folios, a and b, c and d, indicate the first and second columns of the recto and verso pages, respectively; dashes between the letters will be omitted for references occupying two or more columns: as 169bd. Roman numerals indicate volumes (this indication being omitted in the case of Q and MA, which together make up Vulgate Version, VI, and VM, Vol. II); except in the case of M, where they stand for Books.

² Such are the appearances in the section, Books XX-XXI, which is closely related to MA and MH, of the account of Tristan's death according to the Tristan (M 807; Löseth, sec. 546), and of the statement that Constantine Gador's son is Arthur's successor (M 860), drawn from MT 127.

the pseudo-Borron cycle, represented mainly by HM. For M 35-44, however, VM provides an alternative text to HM, the two accounts each beginning with the prose version of the true Robert de Borron's metrical Merlin;¹ and M 44-64 is derived from the Vulgate continuation in VM. At page 64, however, M takes up the pseudo-Borron continuation, following it through the rest of Book I, and through Books II-IV. For M 64-139, HM is the only representative of the source. An alternative text is then furnished by A, which also continues the narrative for a while after HM finishes, leaving it in midair (at M 145). But at M 151 the narrative of A diverges completely, and there is no known representative of Malory's source for the rest of Book IV.

I have based my comparison on HM, checking the variants with VM and A where they run parallel, and collating these two texts in full where they provide the only source.

Book V (M 160-82)

Book V is based on the first half of MT, an account roughly parallel to VM. The close verbal parallels which indicate that the English poem must have been used by Malory begin as early as M 165, MT 23,² but the dependence of M upon MT is attested even earlier by the appearance as characters of Uwaine and Lancelot: M 162, MT 11-12.³ Yet there are in M reminiscences of VM: Arthur is kind to the Roman messengers (M 160-62, VM 425-6; MT 4-15, he is very ferocious); in the final battle he encourages his men (M 173-4, VM 440-41; MT 60-67, this is not mentioned). Malory, then probably remembered VM, even if he did not have it,

¹ See Bruce, Evolution of Arthurian Romance, I, 366.

² See Vinaver, Malory, pp. 135-6.

³ There is a random verbal resemblance still earlier, at MT 4, M 160 (noted by Vinaver, Malory, p. 135).

as well as MT, before him.

MT, accordingly, provides the basis of comparison; the variants, however, being checked with VM.

Books VI and XIX (M 183-212, 772-96)

These two Books (together with the story of the birth of Galahad, Books XI-XII, derived by Malory from an interpolation in the Tristan) present the only material in M drawn from the Lancelot proper. Book XIX contains a compressed and considerably modified version of the Charrette story, L IV, 156-225, introduced by an account of the abduction of Guenevere, and followed by a story of the healing of Sir Urre of Hungary, for neither of which a source has been discovered.¹ Book VI commences, M 183-204, with a faithful reproduction of several stories selected from the Ag-ravain section of the Lancelot, L V, 87-312.² M 204-8, where Lancelot essays the adventure of the Chapel Perilous in order to heal Meliot de Logres, reveals such detailed similarities to the parallel account in the Perlesvaus, pp. 337-49, that in spite of the different settings of the two narratives the Perlesvaus appears to constitute a satisfactory basis for comparison.³ But between this account and the conclusion, M 211-12, modelled after L V,

¹ For the account of Guenevere's abduction, analogues have been adduced from Classical mythology and from Welsh legend, but there is not sufficient evidence to establish a definite source. See Cross and Nitze, Lancelot and Guenevere, p. 61. n. 1.

² The source material is to be found in three sections: L V, 87-102, corresponding to M 183-92; L V, 204-15, to M 192-99; and L V, 306-12, to M 199-204. Vinaver, Malory, p. 148, follows Sommer, Studies, pp. 189-90 and 274; Eduard Wechssler, Über die verschiedenen Redaktionen des Robert von Borron zugeschriebenen Graal-Lancelot-Cyklus, p. 35; and Miss Scudder, op. cit., p. 418, in mentioning the existence of the first two sections only. But that of the third was noted in 1901 by Miss Weston, The Legend of Sir Lancelot, pp. 155-7.

³ A detailed treatment of the relationship between Malory and the Perlesvaus will be available in my article, "A Source for Malory, Book VI, Chapters XIV-XV," to appear in the August, 1932, issue of Modern Philology.

312-18, there are two stories for which no source has been identified.¹

Since as a general rule Malory follows his ascertained sources closely, it is improbable that he himself invented the adventures of unknown source, or even made the selection of the traceable stories. What we probably have to deal with is the work of an intermediate redactor, part of whose collection of stories about Lancelot Malory was working from. Yet the work of this redactor would seem to have been confined to selection and rearrangement, with perhaps some introduction of literary reminiscences.² Where M runs parallel to a passage in L, it runs very close to it. The few slight variants from L in these passages may therefore be counted as Malory's own almost as surely as those in the Merlin and MT sections.

L has been, accordingly, the basis of comparison, the variants for both Book VI and Book XIX being checked with the printed text of 1533 (1¹);³ also, those for XIX with Chrétien's

¹ For the story of Lancelot and Sir Pedyvere, M 210-11, there exist analogues in L V, 160-62 (noted by Miss Weston, Legend of Sir Lancelot, pp. 157-8), and 305-6.

² The stories in Book VI seem to have been rehandled with Chrétien's Yvain in mind. As is not the case in L, both Hector and Lancelot are told that they can find adventures by going to Turquine's castle (which even in L presents a distinctly other-world landscape) and beating on a basin by a spring, and each follows the advice (M 184-5; L V, 89-90; 1¹ II, 79c-80a - M 192-3; L V, 204-5; 1¹ II, 118bd; 1² E 6d-7b). The castle which Lancelot conquers is made to contain captive ladies and damsels who have been forced to do "sylke werkes" to support themselves (M 199; L V, 214; 1¹ II, 121c; 1² F 2b).

³ Miss Weston, The Legend of Sir Lancelot, Chaps. IX-XI, presents evidence indicating, in her opinion, that this edition represents, along with the Dutch Lancelot, a manuscript family particularly close to Malory's source for the Lancelot-Queste-Mort Artu. But what she really proves is only that 1¹ is nearer to M than is the edition of 1513, as represented by Sommer's comparison with M in his Studies. 1¹ turns out actually to be very similar to L, and on the occasional points of difference is against M as often as with it. Probably the same thing is true of the Dutch Lancelot, which I have undertaken to compare only on a few points noted by Miss Weston.

Charrette (C), the ultimate source of the Lancelot account;¹ and those for Book VI with the corresponding passages in Volume II of the edition of 1488 (1²),² which, in spite of minor variants, presents very nearly the same text as the edition of 1533.³

Of the passages with no known source, the two stories in Book VI are unimportant. Both the opening and the close of Book XIX, however, contain points that are in harmony with tendencies of characterization that appear elsewhere in M, and which accordingly possess a certain value as confirmatory evidence.

Book VII (M 213-72)

For this Book, important though it is in the characterization of Gareth, there are known only the vaguest of sources. Certainly the ultimate source is a lost romance of the "Beautiful Unknown" group particularly close to Renaud de Beaujeu's Li bel inconnu.⁴ At the other extreme, sources in Malory's own life have been suggested for certain details.⁵ But in the case of most of the narrative of Book VII, to which not the slightest parallel can be adduced, only a few inferences as to Malory's originality may be drawn.

¹ That Malory's source must have been the Lancelot, and not Chrétien, is shown by the fact that, as noted by Gaston Paris - Romania, XII (1883), 501, n. 2 - Lancelot's generosity toward Meleagant is to be found in the first two, but not in the third (M 787-8; L IV, 225; 1¹ II, 18bc; C 251). But the value of C for comparison appears in its agreeing with M (781-2; C 168) against L (IV, 210; 1¹ II, 14ab) that Lancelot notices the injury to his hand as soon as he leaves the Queen.

² The parallels to M 183-92 would exist in Vol. I, which I have not been able to consult.

³ Both, for example, date Lancelot's return to court after his adventures in Kay's armor as Pentecost of the year 225 (1¹ III, 30c; 1² L 5b), whereas in L V, 318, it is A.D. 435.

⁴ See Schofield, "Studies on the Libeaus Desconus," for analyses of the extant romances of the group. M presents cross-agreements with them (and with the related "Joie de la court" episode in the Erec as well), indicating a separate ancestry.

⁵ See Vinaver, Malory, p. 138.

Both the prominence of Lancelot and the unfavorable characterization of Gawain, each of which is highly inappropriate to a romance dealing with Gawain's brother, are probably additions by Malory.¹ Otherwise, it is possible to claim for points of characterization which appear in Book VII only confirmatory value. If Malory was modifying his sources for the purpose of characterization, he must have modified the lost original of Book VII as well as the rest, and it should be possible to find in Book VII examples of some of his tendencies.

Books VIII-XII (M 273-611)

This long section (including the account, in Books XI-XII, of the adventures centering around the begetting of Galahad, which is derived ultimately from the Lancelot) was obviously taken by Malory from the prose Tristan, but from a version of it to which no manuscript or series of manuscripts now extant entirely corresponds. LÜseth,² however, showed the relation of Malory to MSS B.N. fr. 103 and 99, and to these two Vinaver³ has added MS B.N. fr. 334. Vinaver has even attempted to restrict to a separate division of M the textual tradition of each of the three manuscripts, but unfortunately his precise delimitation is unfounded.⁴

For purposes of comparison, however, without regard to ul-

¹ For detailed evidence supporting this statement, see the chapters on Lancelot and Gawain following. Both points might possibly have been introduced by an intermediate redactor influenced by the Tristan. Book VII contains not only many characters prominent in the Tristan, but also a number of allusions to the Tristan story of Sir La Cote mal Taille. In that story, Lancelot befriends the young knight; and the Tristan as a whole is notoriously hostile to Gawain. But the Gawain-Gareth-Lancelot relationship is so important in later alterations in M that the changes here as well are probably Malory's own.

² Op. cit., pp. xxii-xxiii, and passim.

³ Tristan, pp. 51-57.

⁴ Vinaver, Tristan, pp. 81-87, and Malory, pp. 138-40. See, however, the reviews by Winfrey and Brugger. Additional evidence against Vinaver's theory has turned up in my comparison.

timite manuscript ancestry, it is possible to make a workable tentative assignment of sources. M 273-455 gives evidence of being derived from a manuscript closely related to MSS B.N. fr. 103 (T¹) and 334 (T²). In general, the similarities to T¹ are greater at the beginning of the subsection, and those to T² at the end, but the two manuscript traditions overlap, and that of T¹ continues past the end to a position corresponding to M 465. The account here, T¹ 298ac, of the murder of Lamorak, is not reproduced in M at this point, but later on, at M 504 and 512-13.¹ After M 465 the textual tradition represented by M is essentially free from influence of T¹ or T²,² and is in all large respects identical with that of MS B.N. fr. 99 (T³), which alone of the Tristan manuscripts³ interpolates the episode of Alexander the Orphan, beginning M 465, and that of the tournament of Galahalt of Sur-luse, and is one of the few to interpolate the Galahad story.⁴

M 273-455 has been compared with T¹, the variants being checked with T² as well. For M 455-611, the basic comparison has been made with T³. The variants have been checked: (1) for M 455-

¹ See Vinaver, Tristan, pp. 45-48; and L  seth, pp. 185-86.

² The account of Lancelot's departure from Joyous Garde has been stated by Vinaver, Tristan, pp. 48-49, and L  seth, sec. 384, n. 5, to be peculiar to M 566 and T¹ 338d-39a. But a little later in the story T³ 503d introduces the remark that Lancelot had departed, which may indicate the existence of an account of Lancelot's departure in the common source of T³ and M, and could certainly have provided enough of a hint for Malory to invent the departure. An actual agreement exists between M 504 and T¹ 304cd against T³ 406b, in having Palamedes inform the other knights of Lamorak's death. But the details of his account in M, as has been stated in the body of the text, belong back at T¹ 298ac, M 465. There are doubtless other minor cross-agreements, explainable only by a complete knowledge of the manuscript genealogy of the Tristan. But T³, which alone contains the large interpolations found in M, must be the basis of comparison.

³ Alone, that is, save for its duplicate, MS Chantilly 315-17.

⁴ Against all the other manuscripts of the Galahad interpolation (and L V, 388, as well) T³ 536cd agrees with M 589 in naming the enchained knight Persides. See L  seth, sec. 388a; T⁴ 188.

65, with T¹ and T²; (2) for M 465-504, with the accounts of Alexander the Orphan and of Galahalt's tournament which appear in MSS B.N. fr. 350 and 362 of the Palamedes as summarized by Lőseth, and are interpolated in the Prophecies of Merlin (text Pr);¹ (3) for the Galahad story, with L, as representing the original version, and with T⁴, the printed text of the interpolation in another Tristan manuscript.

Books XIII-XVII (M 612-725)

Malory here presents, with comparatively few alterations, a condensed translation of the Vulgate Queste, a fairly uniform text. Vinaver has demonstrated² that the manuscript used by Malory was intermediate between the two manuscript families, A and B, now extant, and better than any of the manuscripts comprising them; but that it is most nearly represented by family B, and particularly by MS O (B.N. fr. 120; my q¹).³ For reasons of convenience and uniformity my basic comparison is with Q in Sommer's Vulgate Version, representing a poor manuscript of family A, but the variants have been checked with q², Pauphilet's edition, the best representative of family A, and with photostats of q¹ itself.

Books XVIII, XX-XXI (M 725-72, 797-861)

The text of M here is derived ultimately from the Mort Artu of the Vulgate Cycle, but it also stands in intimate relationship with the English poem MH, another derivative. As has been shown by Bruce, M XX-XXI, although very similar to MH 49-121,

¹ M, T³ (with Chantilly 315-17), Pr, and the two Palamedes manuscripts, are the only known texts of these two episodes. See Paton, Les prophecies de Merlin, I, 375-76.

² Malory, pp. 141-47.

³ An interesting confirmation of this critical deduction is provided by the fact that MS 120 is known to have belonged to the Parisian bookseller Reynauld du Montot, who sold French manuscripts, among them a Tristan, in England. See Nitze, MP., XXVIII (1930-31), 365, and Perlesvaus, p. 11, n. 1.

cannot be derived from it (at least alone). Minor correspondences with the Mort Artu on points not in MH indicate that Malory must have been drawing on a version nearer the Vulgate - a redaction, Bruce believes, which was the common source of M and MH for this part of the narrative. The verbal parallels between M and MH¹ he explains as the result of close translation from the common source.²

But two of the parallels cannot be explained away in this manner, for in them the prose preserves the meter of the English verse even to the point of unnatural word order. The passages are quoted below, the most significant parallels being italicized:

MH, ll. 2569-71.

Yiff that they ouer oure
landys Ryde,
All to noght they myght vs
brynge,
Whyle we in holys here vs
hyde.

M 831, ll. 15-17.

And they thus ouer our landes
ryde / they shalle by processe
brynge vs alle to noughte
whyles we thus in holes vs
hyde.

MH, ll. 2842-46.

But have good day, my lord
the kyng
ye wynne no worshyp at thys
walle;
And I wold my knyghtis oute
brynge.

M 836, ll. 15-18.

Now haue good day my lord the
kyng for wyt you wel ye wynne
no worshyp at this wallys / &
yf I wold my knyghtes oute
brynge.³

¹ Printed by Sommer, *Studies*, pp. 263-64.

² *Anglia*, XXIII (1900), 67-100, and XXX (1907), 209-16. The arguments are also recapitulated in Bruce's edition of MH. For an interesting confirmation of the conclusion that Malory was working from a French source, see Vinaver, *Malory*, pp. 151-52. Bruce's explanation of the verbal parallels is concurred in by Mead, *Selections from Sir Thomas Malory's Morte Darthur*, pp. 305-10, to whom Bruce refers, and by Vinaver, *Malory*, pp. 150-51.

³ Quotations reproduce spelling and punctuation exactly, except that in the case of manuscripts and early editions, all abbreviations are expanded without indication, while in that of modern editions the abbreviations kept by the editors are retained, but editorial indications of departure from the manuscripts ignored. Long s, and similar orthographic peculiarities, are always disregarded.

These resemblances create at least a strong suspicion that Malory knew MH, and this suspicion is confirmed by an examination of the first part of MH for similarities to M XVIII. The stories differ greatly, so that MH could not have been Malory's main source, yet the two agree against MA in a number of details, notably that Galahalt is an important figure in the tournament at Winchester, whereas in the Vulgate Cycle he has died long ago and accordingly makes no appearance here;¹ and that Bors is more energetic in his preparations to fight for Guenevere, telling the other knights of his intention, and being ready in the lists when Lancelot appears to relieve him.²

It appears therefore that Malory knew and remembered, if he did not constantly consult, the English poem MH; and if this is true, the hypothesis of a lost common source for M and MH, other than the ordinary Mort Artu, is probably unnecessary.³ But in any event, the only materials available for comparison are the Mort Artu and MH. MH and MA, accordingly, have been collated throughout for the three Books, the Vulgate text being controlled by comparison of variants with ma and 11¹.

The collations made are recapitulated briefly in the following table, the detailed references being available in the Appendix. Asterisks indicate that no source is known for the passage.

M 35-44	HM I, 98-146	VM 58-88
44-64		88-159, 192
64-139	I, 147-	
	II, 228	

¹ M 738 ff; MH 2, 8-9. MA 210 ff.; ma 11 ff.; 11¹ III, 117c ff.

² M 732-34, MH 42-45. This is not the case in MA 266; ma 88; 11¹ III, 133a.

³ Considering Books XX-XXI alone, Sommer finally concludes - Anglia, XXIX (1906), 529-38 - that Malory was working from a lost common source plus MH itself. This view is also taken by Wells, Manual, p. 49.

M 139-45	HM II, 228-54	A 1-18	
145-51		19-36	
151-59 *			
160-81	MT 1-95	VM 424-41	
181-82 *			
183-92	L V, 87-102	1 ¹ II, 79a-83b	
192-204	204-312	II, 118b-	1 ² E6d-L2c
		III, 28a	
204-208			<u>Perlesvaus,</u> <u>337-49.</u>
208-11 *			
211-12	312-18	III, 28a-30c	L2c-5b
213-72 *			
273-455		T ¹ 27a-282d	T ² 27c-336b
455-65	T ³ 360a-76d	282d-98c	336b-51d (incomplete)
465-504	376d-413c	Pr 297-333	
505-71	413d-508d		
571-606	509a-48c	T ⁴ 60-337	L V, 105-409
606-11	548c-60d	55-60, 337-41	
612-725	Q 3-199	q ¹ 522d-65d	q ² 1-280
725-70	MH 1-49	MA 203-69	ma 1-92
771-76 *			1 ¹ III, 115d-33d
777-88	L V, 160-225	C 13-252	II, 2c-18c
788-97 *			
797-861	MH 49-121	MA 269-391	ma 92-264
			III, 133d-61d

To what extent Malory himself was responsible for the selection and arrangement of the material in the Morte Darthur - the omission of the early life of Lancelot and of the last adventures and death of Tristram; the insertion of the Charrette story into the Mort Artu, and the separation of the interlaced accounts of Guenevere's trial for poisoning and of Lancelot and the Maid of Astolat; all the numerous minor transpositions which have not been indicated in the page references above - and to what extent the process had already taken place in the production of one or more redacted compilations which Malory worked from, is a problem which does not greatly concern the present investigation. The evidence of characterization rests upon a minute comparison within the individual episodes, regardless of their position in M.

Upon such a comparison, the phenomena indicative of characterization are to be found in portions of M derived from every one of its ultimate sources. Accordingly one man, who reworked

all the material from the different sources, must be responsible for these phenomena. But the sources include certainly one English poem, and very probably two. There cannot have existed, therefore, a "French Book" exactly equivalent to M except for language. However many hands may have had a part in reshaping the Morte Darthur, it seems reasonably sure that the original characterization, so far as it can be shown to exist at all, is Malory's own.

CHAPTER IV

LANCELOT

In the final tragedy of the Morte Darthur, the destruction of Arthur's court and the death of the King himself, Arthur was in the sources and remains largely in Malory an essentially passive figure. Lancelot and Gawain, his two chief knights, are the characters whose actions tear the Round Table to pieces, and with whom the motivation of the tragedy must be concerned. And with them is associated inextricably, in Malory's version, the figure of Gareth, Gawain's brother and Lancelot's friend, whose accidental death at Lancelot's hands causes the breach between these two great supports of Arthur's kingdom.

Of the three knights, Lancelot is of the greatest interest, because in his case there can be found the greatest number of variants between the Morte Darthur and its sources tending to develop his character, and because his character as so developed combines the two elements of motivation and of genuine, complex individuality. The constituents of this individual personality are almost never original with Malory. Emphatically, or in hints, they are to be found in one or another of his sources. But that Malory, knowing the source conceptions of Lancelot, had a mental picture of his character as a whole and deliberately altered the narrative he was translating, on many occasions, is clearly indicated by the numerous variants which will be presented below.

Not the first mention of Lancelot in the Morte Darthur, but his first appearance as an important knight of the court, is

signalized by an elaborate prefatory paragraph, apparently entirely original, at the beginning of Book VI.

M 183. "In al turnementys and Iustes and dedes of armes both for lyf and deth he passed al other knyghtes / and at no tyme he was neuer ouercome / but yf it were by treson or enchauntement / so syr Launcelot encreaced soo merueyllously in worship / and in honour / therfor is he the fyrst knygt that the frensshe book maketh mencyon of after kynge Arthur came fro rome / wherfore quene gweneuer had hym in grete fauour aboue al other knyghtes . and in certayne he loued the quene ageyne aboue al other ladyes damoyssels of his lyf / And for her he dyd many dedes of armes and saued her from the fyer thorou his noble chyualry."

In the Lancelot, where the events constituting Malory's Book VI occur in the Agravaing section, after Lancelot's reputation has long been well established, there is of course no such summary preceding them.

This is essentially a character sketch of Lancelot, and the two traits it emphasizes - surpassing prowess, and loyal love for Guenevere - appear prominently both in Book VI and elsewhere in the Morte Darthur.

The concept of Lancelot as the ideal lover of Guenevere came to Malory, of course, from his sources. In the case of the one source, MT, which mentions Lancelot without alluding to this phase of his character, variants in M make up the deficiency:

M 164. Lancelot is angry that he has to go off on the Roman campaign and leave the Queen, whereas Tristram is permitted to stay with Mark and Isoud.

MT 19-21. Lancelot is not mentioned at this point.

VM. Lancelot does not appear in the story at all.

M 164. Guenevere "made grete sorowe for the departynge of her lord and other."

MT 21-22. Only her sorrow for Arthur's departure is described.

VM 427-28. None of her feelings are told.

But by a shift in emphasis, Malory's version reinterprets Lancelot's character as a lover, minimizing the fleshly side of his affair with Guenevere, and stressing his unselfish loyalty.

The change is in harmony with, and would seem to be the result of, an idea so obviously forced into the context in a number of instances that it must be Malory's own: the reprobation of

the licenses of courtly love - or rather, the insistence that the love of true knights in Arthur's days was purely platonic.

M 197. Lancelot expresses his disapproval of a robber knight: "Is he a theef & a knyght & a rauyssher of wymmen / he doth shame vnto the ordre of knyghthode."

L V, 210-11 (1^l II, 120c; 1² F 1bc). There is no such remark by Lancelot, and the knight's treatment of women is only implied vaguely, if at all, in the damsel's story that after he had stolen her horse, "si me volt encore faire toute¹ vilonnie pour ce que iou en parlai."

M 474. Alexander the Orphan has been rescued by a damsel (whom he never marries). "Thenne he kyste her and dyd to her plesaunce as it pleased them bothe at tymes and leysers."

T³ 381b (Pr 310). "Il auint quelle y perdi son pucelage."

M 497. Mark and Perceval discuss Tristram, Perceval insisting that so good a knight as Tristram could not love his uncle's wife except platonically.

T³ 399cd. No source.

M 589-90. Perceval releases Persides, chained to a rock by a lady whose love he refused. Riding to her castle, Perceval rebukes her: "What vse and customme is that in a lady to destroye good knyghtes / but yf they wyll be your peramour / for sothe this is a shameful customme of a lady."

T³ 536cd (T⁴ 188; L V, 388). Persides had accepted the lady's love, but the people of her castle imprisoned them separately. He and Perceval ride off leaving her imprisoned in the castle, without any episode of a rebuke.

M 771-72. There is a long digression on love, emphasizing particularly that "the old loue was not so / men and wymmen coude loue to gyders seven yeres / and no lycours lustes were bitwene them / and thenne was loue trouthe and feythfulnes / and loo in lyke wyse was vsed loue in kynge Arthurs dayes."

MA ca. 269 (ma 92; 1^l III, 130a), MH 38.² No source.

To this idealized conception of courtly love Lancelot's conduct is made so far as possible to conform by a series of changes in M. His faithfulness to Guenevere, in resisting other women, is emphasized. The fleshly scenes are glossed over, and Lancelot's protestations of Guenevere's faithfulness to Arthur made

¹ 1^l and 1², grant.

² A leaf is here missing from the manuscript of MH, but inasmuch as this leaf cannot have contained all of the points of Malory's version at the close of Book XVIII (since some of the episodes are to be found elsewhere in MH, and do not agree with M), there is no particular reason to suppose that it contained the digression on May and love.

stronger and, it would seem, more nearly sincere. Especially after the Queste, Lancelot's love is presented as unselfishly devoted to the Queen's welfare.

M 736-37. When Arthur thanks him for his services as Guenevere's champion against Mador, Lancelot tells a charming story of how he became the Queen's knight: When he was to be dubbed, he had forgotten his sword, and she saved him from disgrace by bringing it to him hidden in her train. So he promised always to serve her.

MA 268-69 (ma 91; 1¹ III, 133d), MH 48. Not even Arthur's thanks are to be found.

L III, 127-37. This is not at all the story of Lancelot's knighting, although it is true that a sword is given him, somewhat later in the narrative, by the Queen.

M 186-87. The Queens who capture Lancelot recognize him, and tell him that by falling into their power he has lost Guenevere, and so must take one of them. Lancelot not only refuses their love, but protests that he will prove Guenevere's loyalty to Arthur.

L V, 93 (1¹ II, 80d-81a). He is not recognized, since his hair has just been cut short. Refusing the love of the Queens, he says only, to himself, that "il ameroit mieux a estre mors . que il sa dame la royne qui est fontaine de toute biaute laissast por ces uielles prendre."

M 197-98. Arguing with a damsel, Lancelot refuses to admit his love for Guenevere: "I maye not warne peple to speke of me what it pleaseth hem." He tells the damsel that he does not want to marry, and does not approve of having paramours.

L V, 211 (1¹ II, 120d; 12 F 1c). There is no such conversation.

M 207. The damsel of the Chapel Perilous asks Lancelot for a kiss, which he refuses. She admits that since she knew Guenevere would possess him as long as he lived, she wished to have his dead body to love (though she has also declared, following the source, that she wanted the body of either him or Gawain).

Perlesvaus, 344-45. There is no question of love. The damsel has wished to get the bodies of Lancelot, Gawain, and Perceval. She asks Lancelot to come to her castle and see the coffins she has made for them, and he jestingly refuses.

M 725-27. Lancelot forgets his promise during the Quest and returns to Guenevere's love, but when he finds that they are being gossiped about, especially by Agravaine, he withdraws from her and devotes himself to the service of damsels.

MA 205 (ma 3; 1¹ III, 116a). Lancelot forgets his promise and returns to his love so recklessly that Agravaine finds him out. He experiences no impulse of caution.

MH 1. Lancelot's love is not mentioned at this point.

M 762. After the burial of Elaine, Guenevere sends for Lancelot and recants her jealousy. Lancelot patiently reminds her of her similar ill-treatment of him in the past; saying,

however, "What sorowe I endure I take no force."

MA 258 (ma 77-78; 1^l III, 131a), MH 37-38. There is no such scene, Lancelot not even being at court.

M 781. Distastefully, it would seem, the assignation of the Charrette story is summarized: "So to passe vpon this tale syr Launcelot went vnto bed with the quene."

L IV, 210 (1^l II, 14a). The account is rather brief, but there is no indication of glossing over the story.

C 166-67. The account is a little longer and quite enthusiastic, although Chrétien says he will not give the details of their pleasure.

M 784-85. The damsel guarding Lancelot in Meliagrance's prison does not wish to release him unless he gives her his love. This he refuses, but finally consents to kiss her: "As for to kysse yow said sir launcelot I maye doo that and lese no worshyp."

L IV, 222-29 (1^l II, 17d-18a; C 226-38). Lancelot is rescued from the prison by Meleagant's sister, grateful for a past kindness.

L IV, 219 (1^l II, 17a; C 195-96). The wife of Meleagant's seneschal, who has Lancelot in another prison, will parole him to go to a tournament only if he gives her his love. He says he will give "quanque iou puis faire sans contredit," and she, understanding that he is not free, releases him anyhow. (In 1^l she does not understand, and thinks he will be hers on his return, but the text is manifestly corrupt.)

M 800. On the evening when Agravaine finds Lancelot and the Queen together, "whether they were a bedde or at other maner of disportes / me lyst not herof make no mencyon / for loue that tyme was not as is now adayes."

MH 53. "To bede he gothe with the quene."

MA 275 (ma 100; 1^l III, 135b). "Puis se colcha auoc sa dame."

M 800-802. While Agravaine is outside the door, there is a long, tender dialogue between Lancelot and Guenevere, each wishing he could die while the other was saved. Lancelot assures Guenevere that even if he is killed his followers will rescue her.

MH 53-54. The Queen begins to lament their danger, but Lancelot cuts her off by asking for armor.

MA 275 (ma 100-101; 1^l III, 135bc). There is more of a parallel to M, but the conversation is much shorter, and only Guenevere shows any unselfishness.

M 802-3. Lancelot tells Agravaine, "I cam to the quene for no maner of male engyne / and that wyl I preue and make hit good vpon yow with my handes."

MH 55, MA 276 (ma 101; 1^l III, 135d). No source.

M 821. When the Bishop of Rochester brings the command to return Guenevere, Lancelot declares: "It was neuer in my thoughte . . . to withholde the quene from my lord Arthur / but in soo moche she shold haue ben dede for my sake / me semeth it was my parte to saue her lyf and putte her from that daunger tyl better recouer myghte come / & now I thanke god

sayd sir Launcelot that the pope hath made her pees / for god knoweth sayd syr launcelot I wylle be a thousand fold more gladder to brynge her ageyne than euer I was of her takyng away."

MH 69. Lancelot is persuaded to send Guenevere back by the assurances that she will be safe.

MA 308-9 (ma 145-46; 1¹ III, 142d). It is expressly stated during a conference of Lancelot with Guenevere and his followers that he would much prefer to keep her, but feels that for the sake of her honor it is better to send her back.

M 823. On returning Guenevere to Arthur, Lancelot asserts her general innocence (which is of course a lie), and particularly their innocence at their last meeting (which, as the result of the change on M 800, may be true). 827, he cites his returning the Queen as proof of the purity of his motives in rescuing her.

MH 71-72. He asserts her general innocence only.

MA 310-11 (ma 148-49; 1¹ III, 143b). He asserts her general innocence, and his purity of motive in rescuing her (cf. M 821, but the statement in M is more confidential). He declares that he would never have returned the Queen if he had loved her illicitly (but this, as has appeared on MA 308-9, is false).

Lancelot's surpassing prowess, his pre-eminence among all knights, was likewise signalized before Malory in most portions of the Lancelot, and in the Mort Artu. Variants in M, however, confirm this position for him in portions of the text derived from MT, the Tristan, and the Galahad portion of the Lancelot (interpolated in T³ and T⁴), where his importance is threatened by that of other heroes.

M 171-72. The Roman prisoners are sent to Paris under a guard "of syre launcelot with many knyghtes & of syr Cador." Lancelot is the dominating figure in the fight with the Roman ambush, Cador not being mentioned. But afterward he praises Lancelot's "prowesse and manhode" to Arthur.

MT 47-56. Cador is named, along with a number of other knights, not including Lancelot. Cador is the commander and the hero of the battle, one of his motives for undertaking which is that

"Sir Lancelott sall neuer laughe, pat with þe kyng lengez,

That I sulde lette my waye for lede appon erthe."

VM 435-36. Cador is the only one of the two who is mentioned among the commanders, and even he is not very important in the fight.

M 288-89. A damsel of Arthur's court, seeking Lancelot, who has just conquered the Dolorous Garde, asks Tristram if he is Lancelot, "for she demyd that there was no knyght in the world myghte do suche dedes of armes / but yf it were

Launcelot / Fayre damoyssel sayd syr Trystram wete ye wel that I am not syr launcelot for I was neuer of suche prowesse / but in god is al that he maye make me as good a knyght as the good knyght sir launcelot."

T¹ 40d-41b (T² 42b-43a). She is seeking the victor of the Dolorous Garde (Lancelot), whose name she apparently does not know. Tristram merely explains that he is not he.

M 299-300. Bleoberis tells Tristram his name, and that he is of the kin of Lancelot, "that we calle one of the best knyghtes of the world / That is trouthe said sir Tristram / sir Launcelot is called pierles of curtosy and of knyghthode."

T¹ 49b (T² 51c). Bleoberis does not tell his name. 46c (T² 48c), he has already told his name to Mark and the court, mentioning as his relatives the kin of Ban, but not Lancelot in particular.

M 305. "I haue no doubte of you said the kynge / that and ye shold haue adoo with sir Launcelot du lake / Syr said sir Tristram as for sire Launcelot he is called the noblest knyghte of the worlde."

T¹ ca. 52a (T² 54c). No source.

M 360. Kay says to Tristram, "And ye be syre Trystram de lyones ye are the man called now moost of prowesse excepte sir launcelot du lake / For he bereth not the lyf crysten ne hethen that can fynde suche another knyght to speke of his prowesse and of his handes and his trouthe with alle / For yet coude there neuer creature saye of hym dishonour and make hit good."

T¹ 114bc (T² 121bc). No source.

M 390. Palamedes says he is always victorious unless Tristram is in the tournament, or Lancelot or Lamorak.

T¹ 204c (T² 241c). He mentions Tristram only.

M 394. The prize of the tournament is awarded to Lancelot, but he has it given to Tristram

T¹ 210d-11a (T² 249ab), ff. There is no formal reward, but Tristram (*incognito*) is always spoken of as having done the best in the tournament.

M 420. The fight of Lancelot and Tristram is described as approximately even, but a little in Lancelot's favor: "O lord Ihesu said Gouvernaille I merueyle gretely of the strokes my maister hath yeuen to your mayster / By my hede said sir Launcelots seruauant your maister hath notyeuen so many but your maister hath receyued as many or more."

T¹ 248d (T² 299b). "Ce dit listoire tristan en auoit le plus bel comme cil qui nauoit mie tant de sang perdu comme lancelet."

M 423-24. An anonymous knight praises Tristram, merely.

T¹ 252c (T² 303a). The two anonymous knights say it is the general opinion that Tristram is the best knight in the world, better than Lancelot. (This opinion appears occasionally later in the *Tristan*, and is always suppressed in M.)

M 542. Tristram praises Lancelot: "Of alle knyghtes I oute

take none saye what men wille say / he bereth the floure of al chyualry / saye hit hym who someuer wille / and he be wel angred / and that hym lyst to do his vtteraunce withoute ony fauour / I knowe hym not on lyue but sir launcelot is ouer hard for hym."

T³ 480a. No source.

M 550. Tristram rebukes Palamedes for going over to Lancelot's side in a tournament and fighting against him: "But as for yow I suppose I shold haue done wel ynough / but sir launcelot with yow was ouer moche / for I knowe no knyght lyuyng but sire launcelot is ouer good for hym and he wyll doo his vttermest."

T³ 486a. There is no reference of any sort to Lancelot in the parallel passage.

M 570. Palamedes says of Tristram, "He is the hardest knyghte in bataylle that now is lyuyng excepte sir Launcelot."

T³ 507d. No source.

M 576-77. Bors, on learning of Galahad's parentage, "praid to god it myzt preue as good a knyghte as his fader was." - Although 577, the Grail damsel says Galahad will be better than his father.

T³ 513b (T⁴ 70; L V, 296). Bors addresses the babe: "Ie cuit et croy que vous serez encore tout le plus hault de nostre lignage. - T³ 513cd, the remark of the damsel in M is made by Pelles. T⁴ 70-71, Pelles says Galahad should be the Grail hero, since his father is the best knight in the world. L V, 297, no comparison is made.

M 605. At Lancelot's departure, Elaine says Galahad will be the best knight of his line save one. "Thenne shalle he be a man good ynough said syre launcelot."

T³ 547c (T⁴ 332). The parting is not described.

L V, 407-8. It is described, but there is no such comment.

As will be discussed later on, the humiliating rebukes to Lancelot in the Queste proper are softened a good deal in M. Likewise, the impression of Lancelot's pre-eminence is enhanced considerably by the variants showing his generosity toward lesser knights.

In his treatment of knights whose prowess approaches his own, the variants in M characterize Lancelot as feeling affection for them rather than jealousy, and as sparing them in battle and tournament.

Examples of these traits exist in the sources:

M 387, T¹ 202c (T² 239a). Lancelot, seeing the prowess of

Tristram (incognito), decides not to fight that day and rob him of his glory.

M 481. The account is highly compressed. Galahalt sends word to Palamedes, who has expressed in a letter his fear of meeting Lancelot, that he may come to the tournament and Lancelot will not joust with him.

T³ 385a (Pr 315). The statement in the letter is that he is afraid to enter the tourney, but will bring his damsel and joust for her. Lancelot guesses that the unknown author of the letter fears him, and says he will not fight in the tournament.

M 570, T³ 508a. Tristram's reputation grows greater than that of Lancelot, and Lancelot's jealous kinsmen wish to kill him, but Lancelot forbids them.

The idea of Lancelot's magnanimity, however, is made much more emphatic in M.

M 260. Lancelot refuses to enter the lists and fight against the unknown victor of the tournament (Gareth in disguise).

For Book VII, no source is known.

M 394. The prize of the tournament is awarded to Lancelot, who turns it over to Tristram as having more truly won it. "And for that honour doying to sir Tristram he was at that tyme more preysed and renoumed than and he had ouerthrowen v C knyghtes." Yet everyone goes on shouting that Lancelot really won.

T¹ 210d-11a (T² 249ab). The honor of the day (there is no formal award), is assigned by everyone without question to Tristram.

M 484-85. "Whanne syr Launcelot knewe that hit was sir Lamorak he made moche of hym / for aboue alle erthely men he loued hym best excepte sire Tristram."

T³ 389d (Pr 326). No source.

M 486. Lamorak, on the other side in a tournament, is being overcome by superior numbers. "Allas sayd Launcelot to kynge Bagdemagus / I wylle arme me / and helpe syre Lamorak." He and Bagdemagus do so.

T³ 391ab (Pr 328-29). At this point in the tourney Lancelot strikes down, among others, Lamorak.

M 486. Lamorak receives the prize for the day, and "the Ioye that sire Launcelot made of sire Lamorak there myghte no man telle."

T³ 391ab (Pr 328-29). Although no winner is announced, Lancelot himself is the main figure. There is no such scene with Lamorak.

M 533-34. Lancelot opposes Arthur's idea of going against Tristram and his companions. "There ar two passynge good knyghtes and grete worship were hit not to vs now to haue adoo with them / for they haue this day sore trauaylled."

T³ 471bc. Lancelot's motives in wishing not to fight seem to be shown in his remarks, "Ilz sont trop bons cheualiers," and "Se ie men pouoye departir sans perte et sans gaing ie men tiendroie a bien payes."

M 538. "Alweyes sir launcelot spared sir Tristram / and he spared hym."

T³ 475cd. No source.

M 541-42. Lancelot's thoughts on refusing to joust with Tristram are not told directly, but Tristram explains his conduct to Palamedes: "As for sire launcelot / and there had ben fyue honderd knyghtes in the medowe / he wold not haue refused them / and yet he said he wold refuse me / By that ageyne I wyst that it was sir launcelot / for euer he forbereth me in euery place / and sheweth me grete kyndnesse."

T³ 479d. Lancelot says to Arthur, "Veez icy venir tristan le meilleur cheualier du monde dieu noz veuille aider encontre luy Que ie ne doute nul homme du monde autretant comme ie fais le sien corps seulement," and caution seems to explain his refusal. - 480a, Tristan makes no such remark as in the passage in M.

M 545. "Euer sir launcelot & his thre kynnesmen by the carmañdement of syr launcelot forbare sir Tristram."

T³ 482bc. No source.

M 549. The people are divided as to who won the tournament, but Lancelot uses his influence to have the award made to Tristram.

T³ 485c. There are two opinions, and the decision (there is no formal award) remains in doubt, but the majority think Tristan has done best. Lancelot says nothing.

M 824. In his long "auaunt", Lancelot says he was superior to all the knights he ever met. He had an intuition of the identity of Tristram and Lamorak when he was fighting them, and did not extend himself. Yet he was never unfriendly to other knights, and was always glad to find one who could match him.

MH 72, MA 312-13 (ma 150-51; 1^l III, 143cd). No source.

The same generosity is made to appear in Lancelot's kindness to very young knights. There is one change of the sort in Book VI.

M 202-3. Lancelot in Kay's armor fights against three brothers. As each is beaten, another comes back into the fight in the hope of avenging him. Finally Lancelot stops one of them. "Now late be sayd sir launcelot / I was not ferre from the whan thou were maade knyght sir Raynold / and also I knowe thou arte a good knyght / and lothe I were to slee the."

L V, 308 (1^l III, 25ab; 1² K 8cd). There are four knights, apparently unrelated, and Lancelot overthrows each once and for all. (1^l III, 26b; 1² K 8d. Lancelot, as he rides on, discovers that one of them, whom he knocked into the stream, has drowned.)

Lancelot's kindness to the unknown young Gareth in Book VII may conceivably have come from Malory's source, but the fact that in many of the references his name is joined with that of Gawain, who belongs logically in a story about his brother whereas Lancelot does not, suggests insertion by Malory.

M 214. "There at was sir Gawayn wroth / & in especyal sir launcelot bad sir kay leue his mockyng."

M 215. "Thenne syre launcelot after mete badde hym come to his chamber / and there he shold haue mete and drynke ynough / And soo dyd syre Gawayne."

M 215. "And euer syre launcelot wold gyue hym gold to spende and clothes / and soo dyd syre Gawayne."

M 217. When Kay wishes to ride after Gareth: "Said syr launcelot and sir gawayn yet abyde at home."

M 218. "Al men scorned syr kay / and in especyal sir Gawayne and syre launcelot sayd it was not his parte to rebuke no yong man."

In the story of La Cote mal Taile, derived from the Tristan, Lancelot's kindness to that young knight is made a little more emphatic than it is in the original.

M 348-49. Lancelot agrees to follow the damsel providing she no longer rebuke La Cote, "For he is a good knyght and I doubte not he shalle preue a noble knyght / and for his sake and pyte that he sholde not be destroyed / I folowed hym to socoure hym in this grete nede."

T¹ 140ab (T² 161d-62a). The condition is that neither she nor La Cote reveal Lancelot's identity. There is no reference to the fact (which is the case in the Tristan as well as M) of Lancelot's following La Cote to help him.

The effect of Lancelot's generous patronage is also reinforced by the extended references to his protegés Lavaine and Urre, which have been listed in Chapter II. Even more, this side of Lancelot's nature is fundamentally involved in the plot of his friendship with Gareth - all the variants connected with which will be given in Chapter VI, following.

Many other variants in M serve clearly to glorify Lancelot's character, although it is difficult to subdivide the exact

traits involved.

Some changes seem to contribute an impression of manliness, particularly in contrast to the love-court conventions of the sources.

M 583. Lancelot, swooning at the Queen's censure, awakes mad and leaps out the window. His body and face are scratched by thorns in his fall.

T³ 518ab (T⁴ 80-81; L V, 380-81). He leaves the Queen's presence (apparently not by way of the window) in grief; weeping, tearing his hair, and scratching his face. After days of such mourning, he finally goes mad.

M 593. There is no explanation of Lancelot's beating on the hanging shield; he simply warns the knight of the pavilion not to come too near.

T³ 539b (T⁴ 193; L V, 394). He obviously, in his madness, thinks he is fighting another knight (the shield). He warns the knight of the pavilion to leave him the battle and not interfere.

M 661. During Lancelot's penance, "the hayre prycked so syr launcelots skynne whiche greued hym ful sore / but he toke hit mekely / and suffred the payne."

Q 99 (q¹ 544a, q² 139). "Por la haire qui trop ert aspre & poignant . . . il estoit a ce menes que ceste mesaise . . . li plaist tant . . . quil nassaia onques riens nule que tant li pleust."

M 727. There is no such conversation, Lancelot himself having seen the Queen.

MA 246-47 (ma 60-61; l¹ III, 128b). Bors tells Lancelot that Guenevere will not see him. Lancelot declares that if he cannot have her favor, it will kill him.

MH 25. Lancelot has seen the Queen himself, as in M, but under different circumstances.

M 755. Lancelot, hearing of a tournament, wishes to get into action. He mounts a horse for practice, and this causes his wounds to break open.

MA 227 (ma 35; l¹ III, 122d). Lancelot wishes he could be at the tournament so the Queen could see him. As he writhes in rage at the knight who wounded and incapacitated him, his wounds break open.

MH 12-13. As in M, Lancelot wishes to see action and not "dye thus cowardelye", but his wounds break open in his agitated controversy with his physician.

There seems to be assigned to Lancelot a certain degree of modesty.

M 571. The people tell Lancelot that Gawain failed to rescue the damsel in the vat. "Soo may I saide syr Launcelot leue her in payne as wel as sire Gawayne dyd."

T³ 509a (T⁴ 60; L V, 106). Lancelot himself realizes who

the damsel is, and makes no such remark.

M 572. The people say to Lancelot that since he has rescued the damsel, he should also free them from the dragon. He replies, "What I may doo vnto the pleasyr of god and yow I wille doo."

T³ 509b (T⁴ 61; L V, 106). They tell him that by rescuing the damsel he has shown himself the best knight in the world, and so must be the knight whom the inscription the tomb (beneath which is the dragon) says can lift the stone. "Biaux seigneurs fait lancelet que voulez vous que ien face."

M 618. The damsel who appears after Galahad has drawn the sword from the stone tells Lancelot that he can no longer think himself the best knight in the world. "As touchynge vnto that said launcelot / I knowe wel I was neuer the best."

Q 11 (q¹ 524c, q² 13). He replies "quil ne le quidera iamaiz Car ceste auenture len a tout fors mis del quidier."

M 794. Lancelot does not wish to presume to be the best knight in the world and attempt to heal Sir Urre of Hungary after all the other knights have failed.

No source is known for the episode.

With these variants Lancelot's "aunaunt" of his great abilities and his services to Arthur, much expanded over the sources,¹ is not, except superficially, in contradiction. What they tend to establish is that Lancelot was ordinarily modest about his greatness, not that he was unaware of it.

Two more variants reveal Lancelot as thinking the best of others, rather than being suspicious of them.

M 732. Bors tells Lancelot of the poisoning charge against the Queen. "This is come happely as I wold haue hit," Lancelot declares, and prepares to win back her favor by acting as her champion.

MA 259-63 (ma 78-84; l¹ III, 131a-32a). Lancelot learns of Guenevere's plight from an anonymous knight, who makes it clear that he believes her guilty. Later, meeting Hector and Bors, Lancelot tells them that he expects to fight for the Queen, but not with his usual enthusiasm: "Ie sai bien ueraiement a ce que iai entendu & oi dire . que li torz en est siens² . & li droiz en est mador."

MH 30, 42-43. Nothing is told of Lancelot's attitude toward the battle he is undertaking.

M 784. It is explained that Lancelot, who on account of his own nobility does not suspect evil in others, is tricked by Meliagrance into going on a tour of inspection of the lat-

¹ M 824, MH 72, MA 312-13 (ma 150-51; l¹ III, 143cd).

² ma, l¹, and Add. 17443, as cited by Sommer, have miens.

ter's castle, and falling through a trapdoor.

L IV, 212-13 (1¹ II, 14c-15a). The trapdoor is part of the story, but Lancelot falls in while following a dwarf who says he will lead him to Gawain. His trustingness is not commented upon.

C 180-81. Lancelot, led away by the dwarf, is seized, but the manner is not told, nor Lancelot's action analyzed.

As the most emphatic of these minor points of characterization, Lancelot is made kinder and more considerate than in the sources.

M 188-90. Lancelot, who has blundered into the pavilion of a knight expecting his mistress, starts a fight with him, but when he has won spares him and stops his wounds. The damsel arrives, and Lancelot promises to make up for the damage he has done by having the knight admitted to the Round Table. He explains his precipitancy in fighting, saying, "I was a-drad of treson / for I was late begyled" (an allusion to the preceding episode, his capture by the four Queens).

L V, 96 (1¹ II, 81d-82a). The knight of the pavilion has more of the responsibility for the fight. Lancelot kills him, then goes back to bed in the pavilion and sleeps until the birds begin to sing in the morning. The damsel (in L she is the knight's wife) never appears.

M 198. A churl bars the way across a bridge, over which is Lancelot's only road. He strikes at Lancelot with a club shod with iron, and Lancelot in self-defense parries the blow with his sword, killing the churl.

L V, 212-13 (1¹ II, 121ab; 1² F 1d). Lancelot turns aside from his way toward a castle on an island, where he hopes to find hospitality. The churl seizes the horse by the reins, demanding it as toll for crossing the bridge, but Lancelot spurs ahead and pierces the churl with his lance.

M 753-54. Bors finds Lancelot and confesses wounding him in the tournament at Winchester (as Lancelot has known all along). "Fair cosyn said sire Launcelot ye be ryght welcome / & wete ye wel / ouer moche ye say for to please me / the whiche pleaseth me not / for why I haue the same y sought / for I wold with pryde haue ouercome yow alle / and there in my pryde I was nere slayne."

MA 232-34 (ma 42-45; 1¹ III, 124bd). Bors and others come to Lancelot, who in discussing his wounding threatens vengeance on his unknown assailant. Then, to the accompaniment of some jesting by Gawain, Bors confesses, and Lancelot forgives him because he acted in ignorance.

MH 15-16. The story is like that of MA, except that Hector takes, as he has taken throughout the episode, the part of Bors.

M 780. Lancelot and Guenevere visit the ten wounded knights, "and sir launcelot made grete dole of their hurtes and bewayled them gretely."

L IV, 209 (1¹ II, 13d). Lancelot and Guenevere visit the wounded Kay, but no "dole" is described.

C 161. There is no such visit

M 806. In a conference with his followers, Lancelot expresses reluctance to rebel against Arthur and run the chance of injuring friends who may be on the loyalist side.¹

MH 56. There is no conference.

MA 276-77 (ma 102-4; 1^l III, 135d-36a). The conference is brief, and no reluctance on Lancelot's part is mentioned.

M 828. In a conference with his followers, Lancelot offers to make himself as poor as any of them.

MH 74, MA 314 (ma 153; 1^l III, 144a). There is no conference.

There remains to be considered the most original phase of Malory's characterization of Lancelot - the treatment of his hero during and after the Grail story.

In general, of course, the Queste even in Malory's version humiliates Lancelot. He is characterized again and again as, although the greatest worldly knight, so inferior spiritually that many others will surpass him in the divine adventures of the Grail.² He must submit himself to the discipline of the church, confessing that his prowess, inspired by adulterous love, has been only sinful vanity - a point made even better by Malory than his original:

M 640. "Alle my grete dedes of armes that I haue done I dyd for the moost party for the quenes sake / And for her sake wold I doo bataill were hit ryght or wronge / and neuer dyd I bataille alle only for goddes sake / but for to wynne worshyp and to cause me to be the better biloued / and 1ytel or noughte I thanked god of hit."

Q 48 (q¹ 532d, q² 66). "Cest cele qui ma mis el grant beuban & a la grant hautece ou ie sui . Cest cele por qui amor ie ai fait tante proece darmes³ dont tous li mondes parole."

But on the other hand, in several original comments in M Lancelot's position as the chief of worldly knights is emphasized

¹ This is in part, of course, not a matter of characterization, but a prophetic allusion to Lancelot's killing Gareth.

² For the retention of one of these comments even in the story of Galahad's birth from the Agravain, transmitted through the Tristan, see M 579, T³ 516a (T⁴ 76, and L V, 301, agree substantially, but the passage is shorter than in M and T³).

³ darmes is supplied by Sommer in Q; not in q¹ or q².

at the expense of his spiritual condemnation, and he is pitied because, in spite of his many merits, he is unable to achieve the Grail.

M 618. When Lancelot has protested to the damsel that he never thought himself the best knight, she insists that he was, and still is of worldly knights.

Q 11 (q¹ 524c, q² 13). His statement is different, and she makes no reply.

M 664. The hermitess concludes to Lancelot, "Of alle erthely knyghtes I haue moost pyte of the / for I knowe wel thow hast not thy pyere of ony erthely synful man."

Q 103 (q¹ 545a, q² 145). No source.

M 665. Gawain says to Hector, "Yf one thing were not in syr launcelot / he had no felawe of none erthely man / but he is as we be / but yf he took more payne vpon hym."

Q 106 (q¹ 545c, q² 148). There is only the general statement (reproduced also in M) that Lancelot is one of the four knights with the best prospects in the Quest.

M 671. The hermit tells Gawain that Lancelot has reformed, "and nere were that he nys not stable / but by his thoughte he is lykely to torne ageyne / he shold be nexte to encheue it sauf Galahad his sone / but god knoweth his thoughte and his vnstabylnesse / and yet shalle he dye ryght an holy man / and no doubte he hath no felawe of no erthely synful man."

Q 115 (q¹ 547c, q² 161). No source.

Likewise, although it is impossible to set down examples, the general shortening in M of the sermons of the Queste seems to achieve the effect of letting Lancelot off a good deal easier.

Yet as a second point in this phase of the characterization of his hero, Malory seems to lay stress on the idea that Lancelot did repent in the Quest, and that the influence of this repentance, never quite obliterated in the loves and wars of Books XVIII-XXI, finally brought about his life as a hermit. This holy life exists in MA and MH, but it is separated by a great distance from the last reference to the Quest - the statement that Lancelot forgot his promise to the holy man when he returned to his sinful love - and it seems to be given no motivation beyond the general desirability of retiring from worldly life.

In M there exists a chain of references:

M 638. On account of his sins, Lancelot cannot move to the Grail, "wherfor after that many men said of hym shame / but he took repentaunce after that."

Q 43 (q¹ 53ld, q² 59). Only, "Dont il troua puis en maint lieu qui grant honte len dist."

M 671. "God knoweth his thoughte and his vnstabylnesse / and yet shalle he dye ryght an holy man."¹

M 725-26. Though returning to Guenevere's love, Lancelot soon finds they are being gossiped about, and withdraws from her to devote himself to the service of damsels. In quarreling with Guenevere, he tells her, "I was but late in the quest of the Sangreal / and I thanke god of his grete mercy and neuer of my deserte that I sawe in that my quest as moche as euer sawe only synful man / and so was it told me / ² And yf I had not my pryuy thoughtes to retorne to your loue a-geyne as I doo I had sene as grete mysteryes as euer sawe my sone Galahad outhur Percyual or sir Bors / & therfor madame I was but late in that quest / wete ye wel madame hit maye not be yet lyghtely forgeten the hy3 seruyse in whome I dyd my dylygent laboure."

MA 205 (ma 3; l¹ III, ll6a). Lancelot, forgetting his vow, returns recklessly to his love. There is no such quarrel.

MH 1. The return to his sin is not mentioned here.

M 794-95. Lancelot's religious feeling appears in the Urre story in his prayer, "sayenge secretely vnto hym self / Thow blessid fader sone and holy ghoost I byseche the of the mercy / that my symple worshyp and honeste be saued / and thou blessid Trynthe thow mayst yeue power to hele this seke knyghte by thy grete vertu and grace of the / but good lord neuer of my self;" and in his manifestation of feeling after the miracle has been worked, "And euer syre Launcelot wepte as he had ben a child that had ben beten."

No source is known for the story of Urre (but it is unlikely that such a religious element appeared in a source narrative presenting a magical test for the best knight in the world).

The highly spiritualized treatment of Lancelot's love for Guenevere when they are trapped by Agravaine, and when he rescues her from the fire but returns her to Arthur, has already been commented on. Although it is never explicitly connected with Lancelot's repentance, it at least provides a continuity of emotional atmosphere until the episode just before Lancelot's retirement from the world.

M 854-55. In his last interview with the Queen, Lancelot

¹ See the full reference on p. 64, preceding.

² A paragraph mark in the text.

says that since she has devoted herself to religion, so will he, adding, "God defende but I shold forsake the world as ye haue do / for in the quest of the sank greal I had fosaken the vanytees of the world had not your lord ben¹ / and yf I had done so at that tyme wyth my herte wylle and thought I had passed al the knyghtes that were in the sanke greal / excepte syr Galahad my sone / and therfore lady sythen ye haue taken you to perfeccion I must nedys take me to perfection of ryght."

MH 110-14. The passage is extremely close to M, save that there is no reference to the Quest.

MA 384 (ma 254; 1¹ III, 160a). When Lancelot arrives in England, he hears that Guenevere is dead.

One more episode, apparently original with Malory, shows the strength of Lancelot's repentance in destroying his worldly love, and makes his action a matter not of abstract theology but of specific sorrow for the evil he has caused.

M 857. Lancelot buries Guenevere. "Than syr Launcelot sawe hir vysage bat he wepte not gretelye but syghed."

MH 121. After Lancelot's death his companions find Guenevere, apparently just dead, and bury her.

MA 384 (ma 254; 1¹ III, 160a) ff. Guenevere is dead when Lancelot arrives in England, and he never sees her body.

M 857-58. Lancelot lies grieving on the tomb of Arthur and Guenevere until the Bishop rebukes him: "Ye be to blame / for ye dysplese god with suche maner of sorow makynge / Truly sayd syr Launcelot I trust I do not dysplese god / for he knoweth myn entente . For my sorow was not nor is not for only reioysing of synne / but my sorow may neuer haue ende / For whan I remembre of hir beaulte & of hir noblesse / that was bothe wyth hyr kyng & wyth hyr / So whan I sawe his corps & hir corps so lye togyders / truly myn herte wold not serue to susteyne my careful body / Also whan I remembre me how by my defaute & myn orgule and my pryde / that they were both layed ful lowe that were pereles that euer was luyng of cristen people wyt you wel said syr Launcelot this remembred of there kyndenes and myn vnkyndenes sanke so to myn herte that I myzt not susteyne my self." Lancelot continues grieving, and frequently lying on the tomb, until it brings on his death.

MH 117, MA 388-89 (ma 261; 1¹ III, 161b). Lancelot expresses no such sentiments (nor does he see Guenevere's tomb), and no cause is given for his falling ill and dying.

¹ Cf. Miss Scudder, *op. cit.*, pp. 358-59. "His real repentance is illustrated by the fact that he has forgotten what really prevented him from winning the Grail. He says, and believes . . . that it was fealty to Arthur which brought him back into the world." Such super-subtlety is scarcely to be attributed to Malory. Probably lord is a printer's error for love (compare the parallel statement on M 726, quoted above, p. 65). In any event, the reference to the Quest as motivating Lancelot's retirement from the world is what matters in the present connection.

In the characterization of Lancelot as analyzed above, two traits are connected with the motivation of the tragedy of Arthur: Lancelot's character as a lover, all the more moving to a reader in Malory's version because it brings disaster to the Round Table just at the time when his love is the purest and least disloyal; and his friendliness to less accomplished and younger knights, which is involved in the Gareth plot. The other traits are more exclusively personal.

Almost all the traits involved in the presentation of Lancelot are illustrated by so many departures, in the same direction, from different sources, that it is inconceivable that they could have been introduced into the Morte Darthur except by Malory's deliberate intention. Most significant as evidence for a single author's responsibility for the changes are the extensions of Lancelot the warrior and lover into narrative derived from MT, of Lancelot the supreme knight into the account taken from the Tristan, and of Lancelot the repentant sinner into the Mort Artu story. That Malory was very much conscious of what he was doing seems to be indicated above all by the last description of Lancelot, not yet discussed.

After Lancelot's death, just as at his formal introduction to the story, he is made the subject of a character sketch. In Hector's lament for his brother, Lancelot's repentance is not mentioned, but there is set forth clearly the rest of the complex character of love and valor and manliness and nobility and kindness which existed partially in Malory's sources, but which is built up and somewhat modified by the variants in M. For these details of Hector's outburst there is again no source.

M 859-60. "It were harde ony tonge to telle the doleful
complayntes that he made for his brother / A Launcelot he
sayd thou were hede of al crysten knyghtes / & now I dare

say sayd syr Ector thou sir Launcelot thare thou lyst that
thou were neuer matched of erthely knyghtes hande / & thou
were the curtest knyght that euer bare shelde / & thou were
the truest frende to thy louar that euer bestrade hors / and
thou were the truest louer of a synful man that euer loued
woman / & thou were the kyndest man that euer strake wyth
swerde / & thou were the godelyest persone p^t euer cam emonge
prees of knyghtes / & thou was the mekest man & the Ientyl-
lest that euer ete in halle emonge ladyes / & thou were the
sternest knyght to thy mortal foo that euer put spere in the
reste."¹

MH 119-20, MA 390 (ma 262; 1¹ III, 161c). It is stated
that Hector (MA, ma, 1¹: Bors) laments his brother, but the
summary account gives no suggestion that he made any extend-
ed speech.

¹ Text, breste.

CHAPTER V

GAWAIN

In the case of Gawain, Malory had to do with source conceptions of his character not merely differing from each other, but violently contradictory. In VM, MT, L, MA, and MH, Gawain is a good knight and Arthur's right hand man. The sole exception, and it only a partial one, to his nobility of character, is the fact that, in MA, the death of his brother Gaheriet at the hands of Lancelot impels him to take a perfectly natural vengeance on the latter. The Queste,¹ however, makes it emphatic that Gawain is a sinful, worldly knight, to whom it happens as a punishment that he kills many of his fellows during the search for the Grail. The adventures assigned to Gawain in the pseudo-Borron Merlin are not particularly to his credit, and he is presented as planning vengeance on Pellinore for killing his father; but Gawain is still an important and fairly admirable knight. In the Tristan, however, he appears as a thorough villain who, with his brothers, treacherously murders Pellinore's son Lamorak.²

That Malory's version completely harmonizes these divergent conceptions cannot be claimed. But as will appear from the evidence in this chapter, variants in M make the character of Gawain a good deal more nearly consistent than would have been the case had Malory reproduced each source without alteration.

¹ The Queste interpretation of Gawain is repeated in one passage at the beginning of MA.

² For the development of the character of Gawain in the French prose romances, see Miss Pitkin, The Biography of Sir Gawain, pp. 169 ff.

In the apparent attempt to harmonize the sources, the dominant conception is that of the Tristan: the idea of Gawain as a feudist, which provides a character foundation for the story of his vengeance on Lancelot. In conformity with this view of Gawain's nature, variants in M stress the account of the murder of Lamorak, and in general blacken the character of Gawain. Yet at the same time, one of the great dramatic elements of the Mort Artu story is Gawain's shift of attitude from forbearance toward Lancelot to an invincible desire for revenge, and then back again to final repentance. This picture of Gawain could not have been eliminated without gravely altering the story - and in fact, Malory's version not only retains it but also even intensifies Gawain's noble as well as his vengeful side.

The resultant characterization would not yet, considered in itself, be an impossible one. Gawain can be considered as a good knight save for his one tendency toward revenge of injuries to his family - a tendency which he holds in check as long as possible, but which finally overmasters him. But such a conception of Gawain, although dramatically effective, does not square with the previous account of him, which makes him, on the whole, definitely evil. Thus, as a result certainly of the disharmony of the sources, and probably of a change of purpose on Malory's part when he became involved in Books XX-XXI, the characterization of Gawain in M, although approaching consistency in its main outlines, is inconsistent in its varying emphasis on the opposed phases of Gawain's nature.

Since, however, there do exist variants indicating an effort to unify the conceptions found in the sources, and since this unification hinges about a point of motivation (that is, Gawain's vengefulness), the treatment of Gawain in the Morte Darthur is of

considerable interest.¹

In the general debasement of the character of Gawain in the Morte Darthur, the least essentially personal feature to be attacked is his prowess.

M 143. "As the book reherceth in frensshe ther were many knyghtes that ouermatched syr gawayne for alle the thryes myghte that he had . . . these sixe knyghtes." Besides four named also in the source, the list includes Perceval and Pelleas.

HM II, 240 (A 8-9). "Il ne trova en toute sa vie chevalier . . . qu'il ne menast . . . a outranche, fors seulement sis." The two not named in M are Hector and Gaheriet.

M 159. "Oftymes at Iustes and turnementes sire Pelleas quyte sire Gawayn / for so it reherceth in the book of Frensshe."

No source is known for this section (but that M is original on this point seems likely both from the substitution of Pelleas at M 143, and from the reference to the French Book - such references more often than not masking departures from the source).

M 170. The first pursuer is slain by Bors.
MT 40, VM 433. He is slain by Gawain.

M 173-74. Arthur encourages his men, and himself kills the Roman emperor.

MT 60-67. He kills the emperor, but does not encourage his men.

VM 440-41. After Gawain has killed the emperor, Arthur encourages his men.

M 741. Arthur will not let Gawain fight in the tournament because "neuer had sir Gawayn the better and sire launcelot were in the felde / & many tymes was sir Gawayn rebuked whan launcelot cam in to ony Iustes desguysed."

MA 210 (ma 11; 11¹ III, 117d). He will not let Gawain or Gaheriet fight, for fear they may meet with Lancelot and bad feeling arise.

¹ The subject of Malory's characterization of Gawain has called forth a good deal of divergent comment. Claims for complete unity and consistency of characterization are made by Strachey, Le Morte Darthur, pp. xii-xiii, and Miss Scudder, op. cit., pp. 335 ff. There is relatively more truth in the statement of Miss Weston, The Legend of Sir Gawain, p. 10, n. 3, "Malory's Gawain is a tissue of inconsistencies, entirely due to the variety of sources consulted, and the lack of any attempt to harmonize these sources." But the existence of some effort to harmonize the sources, albeit the effort is not entirely successful, is indicated by the evidence to be presented in this chapter. Miss Weston's views are repeated substantially by B. K. Ray, The Character of Gawain, pp. 8-11.

MH 9. No source.

Again, some examples of Gawain's prominence in the story are omitted.

M 728 ff. Bors knows where Lancelot is, and there is no hunt for him.

MA 252-53 (ma 69-70; 1^l III, 130a), MH 26-27. A group of knights, including Gawain, start out to hunt for Lancelot. (Only in MH does Gawain continue with the others.)

M 753-54. Bors goes alone to Lancelot and confesses having wounded him.

MA 232-34 (ma 42-45; 1^l III, 124bd). He goes along with Hector, Lionel, and Gawain. Gawain is very important in the conversation.

MH 15-16. Like MA, except that Hector throughout this episode takes the part of Bors.

M 761. Arthur has been talking to Guenevere. He sends Kay, with Brandiles and Agravaine, to investigate the barge bearing the body of Elaine, and goes to see it only on their report.

MA 256 (ma 74; 1^l III, 130b), MH 31. Arthur has been talking with Gawain, and goes at once with him to investigate the barge.

M 786. Lavaine prepares to fight in Lancelot's stead against Meliagrance.

L IV, 224 (1^l II, 18ab; C 218-21, 238 ff.). This part in the story is played by Gawain.

The Pelleas and Ettard story is not particularly favorable to Gawain even in the source, but it is made much worse in M. There is first a sort of preliminary characterization of Gawain as a light lover.

M 144. His companions having chosen the older two of the three damsels, Gawain says to them, "I thanke yow for ye have lefte me the yongest and the fayrest / and she is moost leuest to me."

HM II, 247 (A 13). There is no such speech, nor any other indication that Gawain likes his lot. (The author does mention the beauty of the damsel.)

Two variants make Gawain much more guilty in his love affair with Ettard, whom he set out to win for his friend Pelleas.

M 149-50. The account of the love-making is highly compressed, and in it Gawain seems to take the initiative. No information is given as to whether he was sincere in his promise to Pelleas to win Ettard for him (so that one may suspect he was not).

A 30-31. It is explained in detail that the lady (Arcade)

first falls in love with Gawain, and then so charms the young man that he loves her and breaks his originally sincere promise.

M 151. After finding Pelleas's sword, Ettard rebukes Gawain, who goes off into the forest. (There follows the story, for which no source is known, of the love of Pelleas and Nymue.)

A 36-40. Arcade rebukes Gawain. He repents of his conduct, and succeeds in mollifying Arcade and arranging her marriage with Pelleas.

And although Gawain's part in the story is never referred to again after Book IV, the references to Pelleas, seemingly of Malory's invention, which are scattered through the following Books,¹ serve to keep the disgraceful narrative in the reader's mind.

More significant as regards characterization in a restricted sense is another small group of variants representing Gawain as hot tempered, and a killer.

M 105-6. Gawain meets two brothers fighting, and by threatening to fight them both, compels them to leave off and go to court, yielding themselves as conquered by him.

HM II, 81-83. Courteously, he asks of them a rash boon. When they grant it, he says it is that they shall never fight each other again.

M 106-8; HM II, 86-91. Fighting a knight who killed his dogs, Gawain overcomes him, refuses him mercy, and in the effort to kill him slays his lady, who has thrown herself in between. He is rebuked for this. - But the account in M seems to emphasize less the unfortunate accident of killing the lady, more Gawain's mercilessness.

M 513. Dinadan tells that Gawain and his brothers hate Lancelot, who must keep his kinsmen around him for protection. T³ 425ab. No source.

M 728. "Syre Gawayne had a customme that he vsed dayly at dyner and at souper that he loued wel al maner of fruyte . . for sir Gawayn was a passyng hote knyght of nature."

MA 248 (ma 63; 1^l III, 128d), MH 27. No source.

M 837-38. "For as the frensshe book sayth / Euer as Syr Gawayns myght encreased Ryght soo encreasyd his wynde and hys euyl wylle."

MH 87. There is no such comment in the description of Gawain's second battle with Lancelot.

¹ See above, Chapter II of the complete dissertation in the University of Chicago Libraries.

MA (ma, 11). There is no second battle.

MH 84-85, MA 340-41 (ma 189-90; 1¹ III, 149d-50a). In the account of the first battle, the descriptions of Gawain's magical increase of strength are entirely laudatory.

This conception of Gawain also modifies slightly the account in the Grail story. The presentation of Gawain as flippantly worldly and sinful is indeed retained from the Queste, and in one place intensified.

M 671, Q 116 (q¹ 547cd, q² 161). Gawain tells a hermit that he would like to talk with him further about his spiritual problems, but he must hurry away to rejoin Hector.

M 635-36. Gawain will not accept a hermit's advice to turn to penitence. "I may doo no penaunce / For we knyghtes aduenturous ofte suffren grete woo and payne."

Q 39-40 (q¹ 53lab, q² 55). "Il dist que la paine de penitence faire ne porroit il souffrir."

But the parallel idea of the source, that the homicides Gawain commits in the Quest are in the nature of a punishment for him, is suppressed, and his murderousness is made one of his chief sins.

M 725, MH 1. Absent.

MA 204 (ma 2; 1¹ III, 115d-16a). Gawain confesses to Arthur that during the Quest he killed eighteen other questers, as a result of his sins.

M 671. A hermit tells Gawain, "Ye be an vntrue knyghte / and a grete murtherer / and to good men sygnefyeth other thynges than murther."

Q 115 (q¹ 547c, q² 161). The hermit explains to Gawain that he has had no adventures because the adventures of the Quest are not such as would appropriately befall him: "Vous estes trop desloial pecheor . Si ne deues mie quidier que ces auentures qui auient ore soient domes tuer ne de cheualiers ochire . nenil ains sont des choses celestiaus & espiritex."

But these few touches can scarcely be said to provide a real character for Gawain. What character Malory's version gives him is as a sort of personification of a single trait: that of revenge for family affronts. One change early in the story may have been made by Malory with this conception of Gawain in mind.

M 140. Gawain leaves court with his cousin Uwayne, who has been banished by Arthur, saying, "Who so banyssheth my cosyn germayn / shal bannysshe me."

HM II, 230-31 (A 2-3). Gawain tries to comfort Yvain, casually addressing him as "biaus cousins". Yvain asks him to accompany him, and Gawain consents.

The more sinister aspect of this element in Gawain's character is presented at the close of Book VII.

M 270. "After syr Gareth had aspyed sir Gawayns condicions he withdrewe hym self fro his broder syr Gawayns felauship / for he was vengeable / and where he hated he wold be auengyd with murther."

No source is known for Book VII. (Gawain's part, however, is otherwise praiseworthy even in Malory's version of the Gareth story, so that this is probably an addition.)

There follows the Lamorak plot, the story of the feud between the houses of Lot and Pellinore. The ramifications of this narrative, as it is extended by variants in M, run practically from Arthur's coronation to his death, and the story strongly characterizes Gawain as a revenger.

The beginnings of the feud are reproduced in M substantially as they appear in HM. Lot, although he is Arthur's brother-in-law, fights on the side of the rebel kings against him, and is killed in battle by Pellinore. Gawain vows vengeance against the killer of his father, and the author explains that he eventually executed his vow. Only two variants deserve notice.

M 72. Merlin tells Arthur that the knight of the pavilion is Pellinore, who will be the father of two good knights, Lamorak and Perceval, and will tell Arthur the name of his son who will destroy the kingdom.¹

HM I, 195. No source.

M 87-88. It is explained that Lot opposed Arthur because the latter had dishonored Lot's wife.

HM I, ca. 258. There is no statement at this point of Lot's motives. As a matter of fact, however, he is unaware of the adultery, thinks Mordred his own son, and is seeking revenge on Arthur who, he believes, has had the infant killed (HM I, 246-48; omitted M 86).

Pellinore's son Lamorak appears as a prominent knight in

¹ The allusion to Mordred, which corresponds to nothing in the action of M or of HM, may indicate that Malory's source was at this point fuller than HM. But the reference to Lamorak might still be original with Malory.

Book VII, but since he is mentioned along with a number of other knights of the Tristan, including Tristram himself, his name probably reached Malory's version through the source of Book VII (Book VII showing other signs of being influenced by the Tristan). The Tristan itself presents Lamorak's story: Coming to England, he further antagonizes the hostile sons of Lot by his prowess and by his amour with their mother. Under the leadership of Gawain, the brothers - all except Gaheriet - band together and slay him.¹

Even in Book X, which is derived from the Tristan, variants between M and the closest ascertainable representatives of Malory's sources emphasize this story and the evil light it casts on Gawain's character.²

¹ The summary account to be found in MS 336 and related MSS (Löseth, 185-86) represents Gawain as the only murderer, but it is probably based on the more detailed story of T¹ and M, where the brothers participate in the killing, just as in the ordinary version (Löseth, secs. 246 and 250) they do in the plan of vengeance. The brothers likewise participate in the murder in the other Tristan version, that of MS 757 and related MSS (Löseth, sec. 307).

² As might be expected in so compressed a version as Malory's, some of the original references to the Lamorak story are sacrificed in Books IX and X:

M 356. Absent.

T¹ 110bd (T² 117cd). Lamorak meets Gawain, who reproaches him with the death of Lot and threatens to kill him. But Lamorak knocks him from his saddle.

Again:

M 447. Absent.

T¹ 275cd (T² 328b). Gawain and his brothers, except Gaheriet, plan to murder Lamorak.

And again:

M 455. Absent.

T¹ 282ab (T² 335bc). Dinadan and Palamedes discuss the hatred between the sons of Lot and Pellinore. Palamedes prophesies the murder of Lamorak.

It will also be noticed that the confusion of the sources in regard to the following alterations connected with Lamorak's death renders superficially plausible the hypothesis that some unknown manuscript version, from which Malory was working, played up the story a good deal more than any manuscript now available for comparison. But the continued emphasis on Lamorak in M, not only in passages derived from the later portion of the Tristan which seems to have forgotten him, but in many derived from T and MA, is ample evidence that the presentation of the Lamorak story in M is essentially original with Malory.

M 390. Palamedes says he is always victorious unless Tristram is in the tournament, or Lancelot or Lamorak.

T¹ 204c (T² 241c). He mentions Tristan only.

M 453. Lamorak denies Gaheris's charge that Pellinore killed Lot, saying it was Balin. Lancelot prophesies that Gawain and his brothers will kill Lamorak.

T¹ 279c-80a (T² 332d-33b). No source.

M 465, T³ 376d. Lamorak is not mentioned.

Löseth, 185-86. Most manuscripts here state briefly that Gawain kills Lamorak.

T¹ 298ac. Instead of the brief note, there is a detailed account of the murder of Lamorak by Gawain and his brothers, showing some close agreements with M 504 and 512-13.

M 484-85. "Whanne syr Launcelot knewe that hit was sir Lamorak he made moche of hym . . . Thenne Quene Gueneuer commended hym / and soo dyd alle other good knyghtes made moche of hym excepte sire Gawayns bretheren."

T³ 389d (Pr 326). No source.

M 486. Lamorak is given the prize of the day, and Lancelot, Guenevere, Galahalt, and Dinadan make much of him.

T³ 391ab (Pr 328-29). Lancelot is the chief figure of the day.

M 487-88. In his conversation with Arthur, Lamorak refuses an invitation to court, saying that he will not trust Gawain and his brothers.

T³ 392a (Pr 330). There is no such conversation.

M 493. Lamorak refuses to come to court, saying he will not trust Gawain and his brothers.

T³ 397c. No source.

M 494. Lamorak is not mentioned.

T³ 398a. It is stated briefly that Gawain killed Lamorak. (The statement, transferred from the normal position - see under M 465 - is in disagreement with T³ 406b, the following variant.)

M 504. Palamedes mentions Lamorak as the third knight who matched him, and tells of his murder by Gawain and his brothers. Perceval mourns Lamorak's death.

T³ 406b. In his ranking of Lamorak as among the three best knights he knows, Palamedes refers to him as if he were still living: "Le tiers est lamorat."

Löseth, sec. 359, and p. 266, n. 1. The manuscripts agreeing otherwise with T³ contain here another paragraph in which Perceval, who knows Lamorak has been murdered, grieves at the reference to his brother and asks Palamedes if he knows who did the deed; but Palamedes says he does not.

T¹ 304cd. The passage is like that just cited from Löseth, except that Palamedes supplies the information that Lam-

¹ For make? There are too many shifts of construction in M for an emendation to be very certain.

orak is dead. But he knows nothing more.

T¹ 298ac. Earlier in the story, the murder of Lamorak is recounted by the author with details which agree with the account by Palamedes here.

M 507. Tristram upbraids Agravaine and Gaheris because the four brothers are justly called "the grettest destroyers and murtherers of good Knyghtes that ben now in this reame." He charges them with the murder of Lamorak, which Gaheris boastinglly owns to.

T³ 417a (T¹ 307b).¹ No source.

M 512-13. A group of knights discuss the tournaments of the Castle of Maidens and of Galahalt. Palamedes recounts the death of Lamorak, murdered after he had won the latter.

T³ 425ab (T¹ 312d-13a). They mention the two tournaments, saying that Lancelot won that of Galahalt.

T¹ 298ac. Some of the details of Palamedes's account appear in this earlier narrative by the author.

M 521-22. Hermaunce's brother tells Palamedes that there are only three other knights he would rather have to avenge Hermaunce: Lancelot, Tristram, and Lamorak. Palamedes replies that Lamorak is dead, killed treacherously by Gawain and his three brothers.

T³ 433d (T¹ 316b). There is not even the brother's initial remark; he only says he is glad to have Palamedes as a champion.

M 586. Absent.

T³ 519a-33c. There is here interpolated in the manuscript an account of the murder of Lamorak in the quest for Lancelot (itself recounted in M XI), as summarized in L^öseth, secs. 305-7. The narrative differs greatly from that of M and T¹, and there is no reason to believe that it existed in Malory's source.

Through the following Books, there are also variants referring to Lamorak or recounting his death. Their presence constitutes evidence that the variants just listed are the result of original changes by Malory rather than of mixed manuscript ancestry. They serve to prolong the evil impression of Gawain's character which is to be gained from the Tristan; and by bringing this other narrative of Gawain's vengeance into juxtaposition with the Gareth story, give the impression that his action in the second case has a foundation in his character.

¹ T², which is incomplete, has broken off before any of the accounts of the murder of Lamorak, and so cannot be compared.

M 586-87. Aglovale and Perceval visit their mother, who laments the death of Pellinore, killed by Gawain and Gaheris, and of Lamorak (the murderer not being named).

T³ 533cd (T⁴ 181-82; L V, 383). As a reason for not letting Aglovale take Perceval to court, she cites the death of her husband and sons; but no names are given for them or for the killers.

M 728. The knight who provides the poisoned apple for Gawain wishes to avenge the death of Lamorak.

MA 248 (ma 63; 1¹ III, 128cd), MH 27. No explanation of his hatred for Gawain is given.

M 737. Nymue reveals the identity of the poisoner and the reason for his crime, which is inscribed on the tombstone of his accidental victim.

MA 268-69 (ma 91-92; 1¹ III, 133d). The culprit is never discovered.

MH 48-49. The guilty squire confesses under torture, but no motive for his crime is told.

M 792. In connection with the list of the knights of the Round Table who attempt to heal the wounds of Urre, the murders of Tristram and Lamorak are recounted.

For the story of Sir Urre no source is known.

M 805. In a list of Lancelot's followers, it is mentioned that among them were eighty knights of Northgalis and Cornwall who sided with him for Lamorak's and Tristram's sakes.

MH 56, MA 277-78 (ma 104; 1¹ III, 136a). Only the total number of Lancelot's followers is given, without details.

M 817. When Gawain has upbraided Lancelot with killing Gareth, he replies by hinting at the murder of Lamorak. Gawain admits this: "A fals knyghte sayd syre Gawayne that thow menest by syre Lamorak / wete thou wel I slewe hym / ye slewe hym not youre self sayd sir launcelot / hit had ben ouer moche on hand for yow to haue slayne hym / for he was one of the best knyghtes crystned of his age / and it was grete pyte of his dethe."

MH 63. In the conversation, Lamorak is not mentioned.

MA ca. 302 (ma 137; 1¹ III, 151cd). There is no conversation at all.

Yet though for Gawain's vengeance there has thus been established a greater antecedent probability than existed in the Mort Artu narrative, Malory's presentation retains and actually strengthens the dramatic machinery of the source, whereby Gawain's vow of revenge comes as a climax after his forbearance of Lancelot.

M 797-98. Gawain tries to dissuade Agravaine from revealing Lancelot's treachery to Arthur: there will be a disastrous war; Lancelot has often saved the King and Queen; he

saved Agravaine and Mordred from Turquine, and Gawain himself from Carados; "I wylle neuer be ageynst sir launcelot."

MH 49-50. He cites only Lancelot's services to the King, and the danger of war.

MA 269 (ma 92; 1^l III, 133d). Gawain's dissent is not mentioned in the brief account of the conversation of the brothers.

M 798, MH 50, MA 270 (ma 93; 1^l III, 134a). Gawain leaves the council of the brothers, refusing to reveal the scandal to Arthur.

M 808-9. Gawain insists to Arthur that Lancelot and the Queen may possibly be innocent, and that Guenevere should not be executed. He is not revengeful against Lancelot for killing his brother Agravaine and his sons Florence and Lovel, since they acted against his advice in trying to trap the Queen.

MH 56-57. There is only the disclaimer of Agravaine, not made to Arthur.

MA 279 (ma 107; 1^l III, 136c). Gawain opposes the plan of executing Guenevere, and threatens Arthur not to serve him again. But the claim of Lancelot's innocence is absent (as is of course the disowning of Agravaine, who in the MA version has not been killed).

M 812-13. On hearing of the rescue of the Queen, but not of the death of his brothers, Gawain justifies Lancelot's action.

MH 59, MA 286-87 (ma 116-17; 1^l III, 138a). No source.

Then Gawain learns of the death of his brother Gareth at Lancelot's hands - an event made more moving in M by its shocking contrast to the friendship between Gareth and Lancelot which, as will be seen from the evidence in the following chapter, is almost entirely original to Malory's version. At once, without the intermediate swooning and lamentations of the source accounts, Gawain makes his oath of vengeance:

I promyse vnto god . . . for the dethe of my broder sir
gareth I shall seke syr launcelot thorou oute seuen kynges
Realmes / but I shal slee hym or els he shalle slee me.¹

On this note of a terrible but by no means entirely ignoble vengeance, animated by an awesome intensity of emotion, Gawain's action for most of the rest of the story is presented. The

¹ M 813-14 (quotation from 814). MH 59-60. MA 286-88 (ma 117-19; 1^l III, 138ab).

conception in M is fundamentally the same as that of the sources,¹ but the presentation is slightly improved by the following changes:

M 830-31. "And soo the kynge passed the see and landed vpon syr launcelots landes / and there he brente and wasted thurgh the vengeaunce of syr gawayne al that they myghte ouerreinne."

MH 76. Arthur's forces waste Lancelot's lands, but the action is not explained.

MA 318 (ma 158-59). The idea of wasting Lancelot's territory is Yvain's, and on Gawain's advice is rejected for the plan of a direct advance on Ganis. (1^l III, 144d. Yvain, as in MA, opposes Gawain's plan of advancing straight against the flower of Lancelot's army, but the suggestion of wasting his lands is absent from the text.)

M 834. Gawain interrupts a polite speech of Lancelot to Arthur: "Sir Launcelot / and thou darst doo batail / leue thy babblynge / and come of / and lete vs ease our hertes."

MH 84. Lancelot's speech is present, but not Gawain's interruption.

MA 335 (ma 183; 1^l III, 148d). The entire narrative is different.

M 836. Gawain, who has fallen in his battle with Lancelot, tells Lancelot to slay him, or else he will fight him later.

MH 85-86. He has fallen, but defies Lancelot to battle later, or even now.

MA 342-43 (ma 193; 1^l III, 150c). Gawain has not yet, at the end of the day, been decisively defeated. He wants to continue the battle until one or the other of them dies.

M 838. At the end of his second battle against Lancelot, Gawain has fallen in a swoon. Reviving, he brandishes his sword as he lies and demands that Lancelot continue the battle "vnto the vttermyst". But Lancelot says he will not strike a wounded man. "Thenne he tourned hym and wente his waye toward the cytee / And syr Gauwayn euermore calling hym traytour knyght / and sayd wyt thou wel syr launcelot whan I am hoole I shal doo bataylle wyth the ageyn ² For I shal neuer leue the tyl that one of vs be slayn." He does recover, and a third battle is planned.

MH 88-89. The swooning Gawain grips his weapons and tells Lancelot that he will not yield, but will defend himself to the last. Later, when he has recovered, he wishes to arrange

¹ A particularly good passage of characterization is not transcribed by Malory:

M 833-34, MH 83-84. There are no such details in a shorter and different narrative.

MA 331-32 (ma 177-79; 1^l III, 147d-48a). It is explained by Lionel to Bors, and partially corroborated in a speech of Gawain to Arthur, that Gawain has no very good reason for thinking that Lancelot killed Gaheriet maliciously, but is so mad with grief that he must either kill Lancelot or else be killed himself and so find peace.

² A paragraph mark.

a third battle.

MA 345 (ma 197; 1¹ III, 151a) ff. There is no second battle.

In this quality of supreme resolution, Gawain's vengeance becomes something in part admirable. With his vengefulness as so conceived, his dying change of heart toward Lancelot,¹ and the praises which Arthur accords to him on his death,² are by no means incongruous. But with the very black picture of Gawain in the earlier Books they do not quite agree.

The variants from the sources in Malory's presentation of Gawain seem, then, to represent an effort, although one only partly successful, to harmonize the different conceptions of him existing in these sources. Such an effort after unity of character is significant, even though imperfectly carried out, and of particular importance is the fact that the unification is made to center about a matter of dramatic motivation: the provision of a foundation in Gawain's character for his actions in bringing about the final tragedy.

¹ M 841-43, MA 350-56 (ma 203-13; 1¹ III, 152b-53d). MH 93-95, wanting, Gawain dying immediately.

² M 841, MH 95, MA 350-57 (ma 203-14; 1¹ III, 152b-53d).

CHAPTER VI

GARETH

The third member of the trio whose actions and interactions are mainly responsible for the tragedy of Arthur is Gareth, Gawain's youngest brother, whose character is presented from an unknown source in Book VII, and elaborated greatly by variants in M in other Books. Gareth himself does nothing to bring about Arthur's fall, but his gentle and noble nature, and even more his close friendship with Lancelot, make his accidental death at the hands of the latter so terrible a thing that it constitutes both a strong justification for Gawain's vengeance and a notable addition to the sorrows of Lancelot's tragic position. It is this function of Gareth as a passive factor in the emotional conflicts of Books XX-XXI which justifies the number of variants devoted to him previously, and in particular the inclusion in the Morte Darthur of the biographical romance, in no wise advancing the main action, of Book VII.¹

Even without the contribution, difficult to estimate, of the unknown source of this Book, there existed in Malory's sources some hints for his presentation of Gareth. Although nowhere is there an important group of stories of which he is the hero, the prose romances from which Malory was working knew of Gaheriet as Gawain's youngest but outstanding brother. His character is sketched along with those of the others in the Grand Saint Graal:

¹ For adverse criticism of Malory's inclusion of Book VII, see Vinaver, Malory, pp. 31-32, and 94.

Li quars ot non gaheries Cis fu sans faille biaux & preus
& pres li mieudres de tous ses freres & ne valut mie mains de
gauvain quoi que les autres estoires de la grant bertaigne en
dient.¹

Gaheriet is highly regarded in the Tristan, and treated
as a better knight than the others, even Gawain.

M 355. Absent (the narrative is highly compressed).

T¹ 109c (T² 116d). Lamorak explains to Tristan: "Gaheriet
est meilleur cheualier que gauvain nest . mais il nest pas de
si grant Renommee pour ce quil fait ses cheualeries le plus
secretement quil peult . Et gauvain conte les siennes par
tout."

M 447. Absent.

T¹ 275cd (T² 328b). Gawain and his brothers plan to mur-
der Lamorak. "Mais gaheriet qui estoit meilleur cheualier de
tous ses freres ne le heoit pas si mortellement comme les
autres."

M 591. Absent.

T³ 536d. Arthur says Perceval is "le meilleur cheualier
qui seans fust que seulement gaherietz mon nepueu."

T⁴ 189. "Le meillour cheualier de chaisens fors Gauuaine
mon neuu."

L V, 389. "Le meillor cheualier," with no exception stated.

M 611. The parting words of Palamedes are not reproduced.

T³ 560c (T⁴ 60, 341). Palamedes tells Tristram to greet,
next after Lancelot, Gaheriet, "preudomme . . et courtois
saige et hardy."

At Gaheriet's death in the Mort Artu, Gawain and Arthur
accord him exaggerated praise.²

Again, the Vulgate Cycle, with its derivative MH, repre-
sents Gaheriet and Lancelot as friendly.

M 183. The material drawn from L begins at L V, 87.

L V, 86 (l¹ II, 78d). Unknowing, Lancelot has wounded Ga-
heriet (Lancelot's men also capturing his brothers Guerrehet
and Agravaine). "Si est tant dolans de ce quil a este contre
euls en ceste bataille. . . . Car moult amoit Gaheriet de
grant amour . Et dautre part il li en poise moult pour lamour
monseignor Gauvain lor frere."

M 811, MH 58. Absent.

MA 281 (ma 110; l¹ III, 137a).³ At Gaheriet's death at the

¹ Sommer, Vulgate Version, I, 280.

² MA 285-89 (ma 115-20; l¹ III, 137d-38c).

³ The remarks are not in Add. 10294, but are quoted by
Sommer from Royal 20 C VI. l¹ has the second remark only, and it
is compressed.

hands of Lancelot, the author makes two remarks: (1) "Fust ce gaheriez .j. des neuus le roi artus que cil du parente le roi ban amassent plus que autres¹ deuant ce que li mautalenz fust entreus montez." (2) "Trop estoit gaheries preudomme & bon cheualier de sa main . Et il auoit lancelot toz iorz plus ame que nul cheualier estrange qui il onques eust connu."

M 811. Absent.

MH 60. Lancelot hears that Gaheriet and Gaheries have been slain (by whom of Lancelot's party is never known). He is sorry that he and Gaheriet, who had loved each other so, were on opposite sides, and that Gawain will be irreconcilable.

MA 282 (ma 111; 1¹ III, 137b). Lancelot learns that he has killed Gaheriet, and realizes that he will have no peace with Gawain and Arthur. Likewise, "moult fu lancelot corrouciez de la mort gaheriez . quar ce estoit uns des cheualiers du monde que il plus amoit."²

But although sources can thus be found for the main points of the character of Malory's Gareth, these source hints are extremely inadequate. They emphasize Gaheriet so little that if one's attention were not directed to them by the presentation of Malory, he would scarcely notice them in the mass of the prose romances - and so little that in the manuscripts of these romances Gaheriet is frequently confused with his unimportant and less upright brother Guerrehet or Guerret. So, aside from the help he may have received from the source of Book VII (and even in it, there are some indications of insertion), Malory's presentation of Gareth is essentially original.

In the first place, except for one unimportant slip Malory keeps the two brothers carefully distinguished. The general rule, as seen operating in Books XX-XXI especially, is that Gareth corresponds to Gaheriet, Gaheris to Guerrehet. Gaheriet, however, is rendered by Gaheris under certain conditions: (a) in references to him as a knight before the story of Gareth's coming to court

¹ From this point to the end of quotation (1), there is no equivalent in ma.

² 1¹ is the only text presenting both motives, as they appear in MH. MA derives the realization of war from Add. 10294, but the love of Gaheriet from Royal 20 C VI. ma has the love of Gaheriet only.

in Book VII; (b) where the part assigned to Gaheriet is not entirely praiseworthy; (c) on one occasion where the source reverses the ages of the brothers; (d) sometimes apparently at random, including the one case where Gareth should have been used to correspond to the rest of the story. But save for case (c) above, Guerrehet is always rendered Gaheris.

The significant readings are these:

M 65. Lot's sons are listed: "Gaherys . . Gareth."
HM I, 147. "Gahariës . . Guerrehës."

M 104 ff. The part is played by Gaheris.
HM II, 75 ff. Gaheriet appears as a knight. At his first appearance, he and Gawain plan vengeance on Pellinore.
A 15 (at HM II, 249). It is likewise Gaheriet.

M 193 ff. Turquine's last prisoner is Gaheris.
L V, 207 (l¹ II, 119c; l² E 8a) ff. Gaheriet

M 287. Gaheris is overthrown in a tournament.
Tl 38cd (T² 40bc). Both Gaheriet and Guerrehet are listed as members of a group of knights who enter a tournament and are all overthrown. But Gaheriet's defeat is mentioned specifically, while Guerrehet's is not.

M 339 ff. passim. A number of parts, some neutral and some honorable, are taken by Gaheris
Tl 95d (T² 103d) ff. passim. The actor is Gaheriet.

M 368. "Whan sir Gaherys smote doune sir Matto and wanne his lady of hym / Neuer syns was he in his mynde."
Tl 162d-63a (T² 188d-89a). Gaheriet steals Mathan's lady, driving him to madness (the story being more detailed than in M).

M 452. Gaheris kills his mother, and the act is blamed.
Tl 279b-80a (T² 332c-33a). The slayer is Gaheriet.

M 483. Gaheris battles Bagdemagus, but is finally overthrown.
T³ 388b (Pr 323). Gaheriet and Bagdemagus fight on even terms.

M 490-91. Gaheris figures quite prominently and honorably in a tournament.
T³ 395ac. This is Gaheriet.

M 506-7. The two brothers of Gawain who have slain a knight for saying Lancelot is better than Gawain, and whom Tristram overthrows, are Agravaine and Gaheriet.
T³ 416b-17b (Tl 307ac). Agravaine and Gaheriet.
Löseth, sec. 362. "Guerret" is the normal Tristan reading here.

M 532. Among the knights missing before the tournament of Louvezerp is Gaheris (though Gareth takes this part in the story before and after).

T³ 449b. This is Gaheriet.

In the sources of Books XX-XXI, the part of Gaheriet as the important and good member of the pair is perfectly clear, but as preparation the changes in M have cleared up the confused impression of Gareth's personality which would have existed had he been equated with Gaheriet throughout.¹ Likewise, there has been built up a character for Gareth which may be derived in part from the source of Book VII, but which is certainly extended without source authority in Books X and XVIII, and is emphasized beyond the suggestions of the source even in Books XX-XXI. Complete citations from Book VII would be illogical, but examples will be given in the case of each trait.

One striking thing about Gareth is his youth, which is appropriate to his charm and makes his death more pathetic.

M 247. The assignation of Gareth and Lyones is discovered: "This counceill was not soo pryuely kepte but it was vnderstande / for they were but yonge bothe and tendyr of age / and had not vsed none suche craftes to forne."

M 261-62. Tristram praises Gareth: "& yf he be yong he shalle preue a ful noble knyghte / he is but a child they all saide."

M 530-31. Gareth has an even joust with Selyses in a preliminary competition for "yonge knyghtes" (that is, all but "preued" ones).

T³ 447d-48b. The competition is specifically for "nouueaulx cheualiers." Both the heralds and Selyses recognize from Gaheriet's equipment that he is not a newly-made knight, but has had some experience. Selyses, however, undertakes to fight him, and comes out even.

¹ Gareth could have been made a somewhat more important figure if his name had been used for all the honorable appearances of Gaheriet after Book VII. Why this was not done can only be conjectured, but a likely hypothesis is that Guerrehet appears so rarely in the sources that Malory thought it advisable to give him some sort of history even at the expense of sacrificing Gareth's prominence, which is not an essential part of his character, and concentrating attention upon his more personal traits.

M 810. Gareth and Gaheris yield to Arthur's request that they attend the Queen's execution. As Gawain has explained to Arthur, "They are yonge & ful vnable to saye yow nay."

MH 57, MA 280 (ma 108; 1^l III, 136d). There is no such mention of age. (In MA, ma, 1^l, Gaheriet alone needs to be persuaded.)

More important is Gareth's character of gentleness and mildness, illustrated by the whole story of his patience under the humiliation by Lynet in Book VII, and commented on both there and in an important original passage later on.

M 215. "And neuer displeasyd man nor chylde / but alweyes he was meke & mylde."

M 272. (The last words of Book VII) "And this syr Gareth was a noble knyghte and a wel rulyd and fayr langaged."

M 757-58. Gareth is the hero of a tournament held at Winchester. Bors reports his success to Lancelot, who praises his character: "A gentyl knyghte / curtois / true / and bounteous / meke and mylde / and in hym is no maner of male engyn / but playne / feythful and trewe."

MA 230-31 (ma 39-40; 1^l III, 123c-24a). Gaheriet is not mentioned in the tournament (which is held at Taneborc), and there is no source for the rest of the narrative in M.

MH 13-14. The tournament, announced for Taneborc, is called off.

Particularly to be noted is the repetition of the phrase "meke and mylde", which constitutes very strong evidence that the matter of M 757-58 is of Malory's invention.

Again, Gareth is set off as the best member of his family morally, keeping himself apart from the vengeful, murderous brothers headed by Gawain. This characterization appears both in generalized compliments (including a number of instances, which will not be listed, of his being called "the good knight", "the noble knight"), and in more specific statements connected with the Lamorak plot.

M 270. "After syr Gareth had aspyed sir Gawayns condycions he withdrew he self fro his broder syr Gawayns felauship / for he was vengeable / and where he hated he wold be auengyd with murther and that hated syr gareth."

Although no source can be compared for Book VII, up to this point the narrative has been favorable to Gawain, so that the criticism is probably an addition by Malory.

M 510. "This Gareth was the best knyghte of alle tho bretheren / and he preued a good Knyghte."

T³ 421d. "Gaheriet le bon cheualier et tout le meilleur de son lignage . fors monseigneur gauvain son frere."

M 512-13. Palamedes recounts the murder of Lamorak, as he left a tournament he had won, by Gawain and his brothers. Gareth joins in condemning their action, and explains that when he found that his brothers were revengeful murderers, he left their company.

T³ 425ab. There is no account of the killing, only the allusions to other tournaments which in M lead up to the account.

M 521-22. Palamedes tells Hermaunce's brother of the murder of Lamorak, "but sire Gareth the fyfthe broder was away / the best knyght of them alle."

T³ 433d. No source.

M 791. "The good kny3t sir Gareth that was of veray knyght-hode worth al the bretheren."

For this story of Sir Urre, no source is known.

A partial exception to this conception of Gareth exists in one incident carried over from the source:

M 634. Gareth meets Gawain, "and thenne they made Ioye eyther of other."

Q 38 (q¹ 530d; q² 52). Only Gawain's joy is mentioned.

But in general, the idea of Gareth as the white sheep of the sons of Lot is perfectly clear. Yet his membership in the family forces him to join in the guard at Guenevere's execution, where Lancelot kills him.

The most important factor in the background of this tragic event is the friendship of Gareth and Lancelot, amounting on Gareth's part to a devotion to the man who knighted him.

This friendship is established in Book VII; and since such a prominent part for Lancelot would not naturally exist in a "Beautiful Unknown" romance of Gawain and his brother, and cannot be thought to have been introduced by a redactor under the influence of the Tristan,¹ it is probably even there mainly of Malory's invention.

M 216. Gareth asks Arthur that he may be made knight at

¹ The La Cote story could have suggested a part for Lancelot in the narrative, a part later elaborated by Malory. But La Cote and Lancelot are not said to become friends.

Lancelot's hands.

M 217-18. Lancelot fights with Gareth, and knights him.

M 261. Lancelot, on the opposite side from Gareth in a tournament, is fighting against Turquine and Carados. "Thenne came in syr Gareth and knewe that it was sir launcelot that fought with tho two peryllous knyghtes / And thenne syr Gareth came in with his good hors and hurtled hem in sonder / & no stroke wold he smyte to syr Launcelot."

M 270. When Gareth returns to court: "Lord the grete chere that syr launcelot made of sir Gareth and he of hym / for there was neuer no knyght that syr gareth loued so wel as he dyd syr Launcelot / and euer for the most party he wold be in syr launcelots company."

The relationship between the two is not mentioned again before Book XVIII, not even in one passage where some remark might be expected.

M 547-48, T³ 484cd. Gareth (Gaheriet) joins Dinadan in smiting down Lancelot so that he will not overcome the tired Tristram with whom he is fighting without knowing it.

But within the fifty pages just preceding Gareth's death the idea of his love for Lancelot is emphasized again, particular stress being laid on the fact that Lancelot knighted him - a point which brings back to mind the whole story of Book VII, and which was certainly unknown to the authors of the references, in the Vulgate Cycle, to the friendship of the two.

M 765-70. In a tournament at Camelot, Gareth performs great deeds for the King's party. Lancelot is fighting on the other side, unknown except to his kinsmen; and Arthur, enraged at his successes, gathers a group of knights to set upon him. "Alle this aspyed sir bors and sir Gareth / Now I drede me sore said sir Bors that my lord syr launcelot wylle hard be matched / By my hede sayd syr Gareth I wylle ryde vnto my lord sir launcelot for to helpe hym / falle of hym what falle may / for he is the same man that made me knyghte." He deserts his side to help Lancelot, and his action, although called into question, is approved by Gawain and Arthur.

MA 252 (ma 68-69; 1¹ III, 130 a). Lancelot is not present at the tournament, and Gaheriet is not mentioned as participating in it.

MH. There is no such tournament.

M 798. Gareth and Gaheris leave the council of the brothers along with Gawain, Gareth explaining that Lancelot knighted him, hence he cannot speak ill of him.

MH 49-50. Gareth and Gaheris leave the council of the broth-

ers along with Gawain, but no motivation of their conduct is supplied.

MA 269-70 (ma 92-93; 1^l III, 134a). Gaheriet joins with Gawain in urging Arthur to ask no more questions,¹ and he alone leaves with Gawain. But there is no reference to any friendship with Lancelot.

Then Lancelot kills his friend, the circumstances in M being somewhat more pathetic, and more in keeping with Gareth's gentle character as it has been developed.

M 811. Gareth and Gaheris are unarmed and unresisting, and as Lancelot breaks in to rescue the Queen, "it myshapped² hym to slee Gaherys and syr Gareth the noble knyghte."

MH 58. Both are unarmed, and are slain in the press by no one in particular.

MA 28 (ma 109-10; 1^l III, 137a). The two are armed. Guerrehet is killed by Bors, Gaheriet by Lancelot after he has joined in the fight to avenge his brothers, killed Meliadus, and had his helmet knocked off by Hector.

Dutch Lancelot, II, ll. 4605-74. Lancelot kills "Guerriës" too, but the details of the death of "Gariët" are the same as in MA.

There follow in M a series of references to the killing which emphasize its tragic quality more than did those in the sources, cited at the beginning of the chapter, which Malory omits, and which introduce the new idea that Gawain is particularly angry at Lancelot for having killed one so devoted to him, as well as being merely desirous to avenge a kinsman.

M 812. Arthur wonders why Lancelot slew Gareth, who loved him so, and learns that it was an accident.

MH 58-59, MA 286 (ma 115-16; 1^l III, 137d-38a). No source.

M 813-14. Gawain at first finds it hard to credit the news. "That may I not byleue sayd syr Gawayne that euer he slewe my broder syre Gareth / For I dar say my broder Gareth loued hym better than me and alle his bretheren / and the kynge bothe / Also I dare say and sir Launcelot had desyred my broder syr Gareth with hym / he wolde haue ben with hym ageynst the kynge and vs al / and therfore I may neuer byleue that syr launcelot slewe my broder . Sir sayd this man it is noysed that he slewe hym ³ Allas sayd sire Gawayne now is my lye gone." He rages, and vows vengeance on Lancelot.

MH 59-60. Gawain swoons over the bodies of Gaheriet and

¹ Add. 10294 and Royal 19 C XIII omit the name of Gaheriet, making Gawain pronounce the entire speech to Arthur.

² Text, myshapped.

³ Here is inserted the division, "Capitulum x."

Gaheries, though most of his grief is for Gaheriet. When he revives, he vows vengeance on Lancelot (though in the MH version it is not known whether Lancelot killed them himself).

MA 286-88 (ma 117-19; 1^l III, 138ab). Gawain grieves over the body of Gaheriet, whom he praises highly, vowing vengeance against the murderer, whose identity he has not yet learned.

M 816-17. In a long conversation over the walls of Joyous Garde, Gawain accuses Lancelot: "Thow fals and recreaunt knyghte / saide syre Gawayne what cause haddest thou to slee my good broder syr Gareth that loued the more than al my kynne Allas thou madest hym knyght thyn owne handes / Why slewe thou hym that loued the soo wel / for to excuse me sayde sir Launcelot it helpeth me not / but by Ihesu / and by the feyth that I owe to the hygh ordre of knyghthode / I shold with as good wyll haue slayne my neuwe sir Bors de ganyes . . . Thou lvest recreaunt knyght sayd sir Gawayne / thou slewest hym in despyte of me / And therefore wete thou wel I shalle make warre to the / and alle the whyle that I may lyue."

MH 63. In the short conversation there is a brief reference to Lancelot's killing Gawain's brothers, but nothing about Gaheriet in particular or his friendship with Lancelot.

MA 302 (ma 137; 1^l III, 151cd). There is no such conversation.

M 818. Lancelot and Gawain dispute over the walls, mentioning the death of Gareth.

MH 63-64. Gaheriet is not mentioned in the conversation.

MA 302 (ma 137; 1^l III, 151cd). There is no such conversation.

M 825-26. On returning the Queen, Lancelot insists that he killed Gareth and Gaheris accidentally. He is sorry to have killed Gareth, since he knighted him and they loved each other. He offers to make a barefoot pilgrimage of expiation, founding monasteries on the way, and wishes a single combat against Gawain to prove himself innocent of treachery against him or Arthur.

MH 72. Lancelot asserts that he did not kill Gaheriet or Gaheries (which in the MH version is, so far as anyone knows, the truth). - 80, he promises to spend the rest of his life in the Holy Land.

MA 311-12 (ma 149-50; 1^l III, 143c). Bors asserts that Lancelot had no evil intention in killing Gaheriet, and offers to prove it by single combat with Gawain. - 334-35 (ma 182-83; 1^l III, 148cd), Lancelot offers to go on a barefoot pilgrimage for ten years.

M 852. On hearing the news of Mordred's treason, Lancelot expresses his sorrow for having killed Gawain, Gaheris, and "myn owne frende syr Gareth that ful noble knyght", and yet let the treacherous brother live.

MH 109, MA 383 (ma 252-53; 1^l III, 159d). No source.

Thus the characterization of Gareth, built up by changes from the sources before the important episode of his death, is continued even after it - when, in fact, by its effect in motiv-

ating the actions of Lancelot and Gawain, and thus, indirectly, their disastrous war and the consequent breakdown of Arthur's rule, Gareth's character is most important to the story.

CHAPTER VIII

ARTHUR

The high point of characterization in the Morte Darthur, on the side of creative originality if not on that of the total number of variants involved, is reached in the case of King Arthur himself. In Malory's treatment of him, unlike that of the Lancelot-Gawain-Gareth group, the factor of motivation is of only secondary importance. Essentially Arthur remains what he is in the sources: a passive figure with whom we sympathize because of his greatness when he becomes the victim of a tragedy for which he is not, to any great extent, personally responsible.

In one respect, however, Malory's version does make Arthur the causer of his own fate. This is not the traditional tragic motivation of divine punishment for the incestuous begetting of Mordred. Malory reproduces that idea once:

M 67. Merlin tells Arthur that he has committed incest unknowingly with his sister, the wife of King Lot, and that God will punish him for his "fowle dedes".

HM I, 147-48, 153-63. This motif appears a number of times.

He makes this act of Arthur's contribute to his downfall, by purely worldly means, through the ramifications of the story of the feud between the houses of Lot and Pellinore, which begins with Lot's hostility to Arthur for the adultery with his wife, and ends with men of Wales, out of their memory of Lamorak, fighting for Lancelot against Gawain and Arthur.¹ At the end of the

¹ See above, Chapter V.

story, Malory gives a new appropriateness to Mordred's position as the instrument of vengeance on his father.

M 830. "By cause syr Mordred was kyng Arthurs sone he gaf hym the rule of his land and of his wyf."

MH 75-76. Mordred is chosen regent by a council of Arthur's knights, no reason for their action being given. Later (89) we have the ambiguous statement:

"That fals traytour, sir mordreid -

The kynges soster sone he was,

And eke hys owne sonne, As I rede -

There-fore men hym for steward chase."

MA 317 (ma 156-57; 1^l III, 144c). Mordred, who is termed here "li freres monseignor Gauvain" (not in 1^l), offers Arthur his services as regent, and is accepted.

But in general Malory makes little of this motif, and often suppresses allusions to it in his sources.

What the Morte Darthur does emphasize as Arthur's contribution to his downfall is his extreme partiality to Gawain, which causes him to be drawn by the latter into the disastrous war against Lancelot. The fact of Gawain's overpersuading Arthur to his ruin is perfectly familiar in the Mort Artu. There are even statements of it which Malory, compressing that particular portion of the narrative, does not reproduce, such as the following:

M 830, MH 75. Absent.

MA 316-17 (ma 155-56; 1^l III, 144bc). A messenger tells Lancelot, and it is stated twice by the author, that Gawain is hounding Arthur into carrying the war to the Continent. (The author's second statement is lacking in 1^l.)

But the French seems to contain no implication that there is anything out of the ordinary in Arthur's course of action, anything beyond a normal reliance upon his nephew and right hand man.

Malory's version, however, has by a series of variations from the sources of earlier portions of the story built up the idea that as a result of their close relationship Arthur is especially partial to Gawain, that he shows favoritism toward him and winks at the evil in his character.

M 101. Gawain on his first appearance at court asks to be knighted. "I will do it with a good wil said kyng arthur & do

vnto yow all the worship that I may / for I must by reson ye
ar myn neuwe my susters sone."

HM II, 68-69. The author mentions that Arthur is Gawain's
uncle, and Arthur says he will be glad to knight him. But there
is no such emphasis on favoring a relative.

M 108. Gawain has been imprisoned for an outrageous action,
but when the lady of the castle learns his identity, she per-
suades his captors to free him. "I shall so speke for yow that
ye shall haue conduyte to go to kyng Arthur for his loue."

HM II, 94. When the lady learns Gawain's lineage, she is
sure he will prove a good knight, and so frees him.

M 159. After the Ettard story, "Pelleas loued neuer after
sire Gawayn but as he spared hym for the loue of kyng arthur."
For this section of M, no source is known.

M 336. Lamorak tries to restrain Gawain from stealing a
knight's lady. "Thenne said sir Gawayne what wylle ye do with
me / for I am neuwe vnto kyng Arthur." Accordingly, Lamorak
will not fight him.

T¹ 93c (T² 100cd). Lamorak, who himself has taken the la-
dy from the knight in battle, and has her taken from him by
Gawain, on learning Gawain's identity will not fight with him
for her, since they are both knights of the Round Table. On
93d (T² 101a), however, a kinsman of the lady tells Gawain,
"Se ne fust plus pour lamour de vostre oncle que de vous vous
en repentissies." (But in fact he does fight Gawain later.)

M 453. Lancelot prophecies to Arthur that Gawain and his
brothers will kill Lamorak. "That shalle I lette sayd Arthur."
(But in fact, as Malory must have known when writing this
passage, Lamorak is killed soon after by Gawain and his broth-
ers, who are never punished.)

T¹ 280a (T² 333ab). No source.

M 487-88. There is a long conversation between Lamorak,
after he has beaten Palamedes, and Arthur. Lamorak says he
cannot stay at court on account of his enemies. Arthur, under-
standing the allusion, declares that Gawain and his brothers
have wronged him too in the murder of his sister, their moth-
er. He says he will revenge her death, protect Lamorak, and
bring about his reconciliation with the brothers. But Lamorak
leaves, asserting that he would have obtained his revenge al-
ready only for his reverence for Arthur.

T³ 392a (Pr 330). No source.

M 493. Lamorak is invited to court by Lancelot and Guene-
vere, who declare they will see to it that Arthur forbids Ga-
wain and his brothers to harm him. But Lamorak says he will
never trust them, and only for Arthur's sake has refrained
from revenging himself upon them.

T⁵ 397c. No source.

M 741. "But as the Frensshe book saith / the kyng wold
not suffer syre Gawayn to goo from hym / for neuer had sir
Gawayn the better and sire launcelot were in the felde / &
many tymes was sir Gawayn rebuked whan launcelot cam in to ony
Iustes desguysed."

MA 210 (ma 11; 11¹ III, 117d). "Mais mesire Gauvain ne porta mie celui lor armes ne gaheries ses freres Car li rois lor auoit desfendu por ce quil sauoit bien que lancelet i venroit . si ne voloit mie quil sentreblecaissent al ioster . Car il cremoit que maltalent & corous ne sorsist entrels."

MH. No parallel.

M 750. "Alle that knewe I afore hand sayd kynge Arthur" - to Gawain - "and that caused me I wold not suffer you to haue adoo atte grete Iustes."

MA 218-20 (ma 23-25; 11¹ III, 120bc). In the parallel conversation, Arthur never mentions having kept Gawain and Gaheriet out of the fight.

MH 20. No parallel.

M 835. In recounting Gawain's marvelous increase of strength at noon, Malory tells the story that "for hys sake kyng Arthur maad an ordenaunce that al maner of bataylles for ony quarellys that shold be done afore kyng Arthur shold begynne at vnder / & al was done for syr Gawayns loue / that by lyklyhode yf Syr Gauwayn were on the one parte he shold haue the better in batayl whyle his strengthe endured thre houres."

MH 84-85. No source.

MA 339-41 (ma 189-90; 11¹ III, 149d-50a). There is only a brief statement, which has no reference to Arthur, but which may have inspired the story in Malory, that several knights had refused to begin a fight with Gawain until afternoon.

The last of these citations presents this conception of the relations between Arthur and Gawain at a point after Gawain's instigation of the war has been established. The others, however, provide an excellent background for the instances in which the Morte Darthur, without specific source, reiterates the idea that Arthur is forced by Gawain's vengefulness into a conflict he does not particularly desire.

M 813. Arthur suggests to Gawain that they avenge Gareth and Gaheris, and they prepare for war on Lancelot. But the King does not appear to be particularly enthusiastic.

MH 60. No source.

MA 289-92 (ma 120-23; 11¹ III, 138c-39a). Arthur is very anxious to avenge his "charneus amis", and overrules the attempts of Yon and Mador to dissuade him from the war. Gawain plays no part in the discussions.

M 815-17. There is a long conversation over the walls of Joyous Garde. Arthur appears to be hostile to Lancelot for stealing his Queen and killing his nephews, but Lancelot declares that only Gawain is preventing their reconciliation.

MH 63. The conversation is short, not introducing this subject.

MA ca. 302 (ma 137; 11¹ III, 151cd). There is no such conversation.

M 817. According to the French Book, if it had not been for Gawain, Arthur would have been reconciled to Lancelot
MH 63, MA ca. 302 (ma 137; 1^l III, 151cd). No source.

M 821. At Lancelot's returning Guenevere, Arthur would have been reconciled with him had it not been for Gawain.

MH 69-70. Gawain's objecting to a reconciliation is recounted, but no comment is made.

MA 307 (ma 144; 1^l III, 142d). Arthur of his own volition refuses to stop the war.

M 832. "Allas said sir Lucan my lord Arthur wold loue launcelot / but sir Gawayne wyl not suffer hym."

MH 79, MA 319 (ma 160; 1^l III, 144d). No source.

Particularly significant are the references in which this dominance of Gawain over Arthur is treated as something sure to occur, whereas no such prophecies seem to exist in the sources.

M 812. Arthur himself declares, "Wyste sir Gawayne that syr Gareth were slayne I shold neuer haue reste of hym tyl I had destroyed syr launcelots kynne and hym self both / outhere els he to destroye me."

MH 59, MA 286 (ma 116; 1^l III, 137d-38a). No source.

M 817-18. Bors, Lavaine, and others rebuke Lancelot for his non-resistance, saying that Gawain will never let him and Arthur accord, and so he might as well fight now.

MH 63-64. Bors, the only speaker, does not mention the question of a reconciliation.

MA 298 (ma 132; 1^l III, 140c). In this most nearly parallel passage, nothing of the sort is mentioned.

M 825. Lancelot asserts that when he first heard that he had killed Gareth and Gaheris, he knew that Gawain would hate him and would estrange Arthur.

MH 72, MA 311-12 (ma 149-50; 1^l III, 143c). No source.

More important, however, than these hints of a tragic weakness in Arthur, are the traits Malory's version gives him as an ideal king, which arouse sympathy for him in his downfall.

One such trait is that of dignity and adequacy in handling the affairs of his kingdom. In Books VI-XVII the King can be little more than a figurehead, the symbolic center of the adventures of his knights. The sources of the first five Books, however, present Arthur as a rather strong ruler, particularly successful in military affairs, and this impression is heightened considerably by original touches in M, especially in Books I-IV.

An essential part of the Merlin account of Arthur's obtaining the throne is his extreme youth - which could not, accordingly, have been suppressed. Malory, however, seems to have wished, after the early stages of the story and the long wars of VM, to minimize this aspect of Arthur's character; and so far as he retained the conception, to connect it with a not unadmirable trait of youthful impetuosity and proneness to anger.

M 45. The subject kings object to receiving as overlord "a berdles boye that was come of lowe blood."

VM 88. Arthur's "bas lignage" alone is mentioned here, but the barons of England have previously (86) objected to him as a "iones hons".

M 59. Arthur is angry at the kings for resisting him so well. His allies Ban and Bors rebuke him for this, and praise the opponents.

VM 121. No source.

M 68. Arthur tells Gifflet that he is too young to undertake the dangerous adventure he desires.

HM I, 176. Arthur makes the same objection, but it is also mentioned that Gifflet is three months older than Arthur himself, who as has just been explained (HM I, 172; M 68, not reproduced) is not quite fifteen.

M 70. Arthur's defiance of the Roman messengers comes after the return of the wounded Gifflet. Malory explains that the messengers found the King in an evil hour, for he was wroth over the mishap. As a matter of fact, Arthur's speech is an angry one, including the oath, "By my faders soule Vtherpendragon."

HM I, 180-81. Gifflet has not yet returned. Arthur's speech is a piece of rather frigid, grandiloquent divine-right nationalism.

M 70. All of Merlin's advice is omitted.

HM I, 186. In trying to dissuade Arthur from fighting the knight of the pavilion, Merlin tells him that he is "jovenes et tenres", and will possess twice his strength in five years.

M 71. This detail does not appear in the compressed account of the battle.

HM I, 192. It is mentioned that in his fight with the knight Arthur had the advantage of speed, since he was a beardless "jovenes enfes".

M 74-75. At the message of Ryons demanding his beard, Arthur says that it is too young yet. The touch seems one of grim humor in a speech of dignified anger.

HM I, 202. He says he has no beard, for he is too young. The whole speech is more humorous and less forceful, with no anger.

Again, in much of the action of the source story, Arthur is only a sort of puppet, moved by the advice and assisted by the magic of Merlin. Malory's changes do not remove this impression entirely. He even states Merlin's importance explicitly:

M 100. At the beginning of Book III appears a sort of summary of the preceding Books: "Arthur ouercame hem alle / for the mooste party the dayes of his lyf he was ruled moche by the counceill of Merlyn."

HM II, 60. No source.

But in M there are omitted or changed a number of the instances of Arthur's acting at the enchanter's dictation, and owing his military successes to Merlin's magic.

M 35. The story plunges immediately into the events leading up to the begetting of Arthur, with no explanation of Merlin's character or position.

HM I, 1-98 (VM 3-58). We are told in detail of Merlin's marvelous birth and early feats of magic. This account sets the general character of a story in which, as is implied by its title, Merlin rather than Arthur is the principal figure.

M 46. Absent.

VM 93. In the first battle against the rebels, Merlin magically sets fire to their tents.

M 53. Merlin's aid is limited to advice.

VM 114. In a night attack on the rebels, Merlin sends a wind and fog to confuse them.

M 62. Arthur acts on his own account in the amour from which his illegitimate son Borre (VM, Lohot) is born.¹

VM 124. Merlin plays the part of go-between.

M 68. Absent.

HM I, 174-76. On hearing of the knight of the pavilion (Pellinore) who fights all comers, Arthur is greatly downcast. Merlin must cheer him up and tell him everything to do.

¹ This story, be it noted, is an episode of Arthur's early youth, before the incest with his sister, necessary to the plot. A later source story is, to Arthur's credit, modified:

M 361. The sorceress "desyred hym to lye by her and thenne the kynge remembryd hym of his lady / and wold not lye by her for no crafte that she coude doo."

T¹ 115c (T² 122c). Arthur tells how she put on him a magic ring: "Si tost comment ie luy eulz ie ouibliay toutes amours . et la Royne genieure et toutes autres . qui ne me souuenoit de personne fors que d'elle . Chascune nuyt me faisoit avec elle Iesir."

M 68-69. Arthur apparently himself thinks of the device of asking Griflet, as a boon, to meet Pellinore in only one joust.

HM I, 177-79. This idea is supplied to him by Merlin.

M 86. The passage is compressed to a few sentences. Merlin only supplies Arthur with information.

HM I, 244-47. Arthur depends completely on Merlin's advice. He makes several remarks such as "Je n'en ferai nient se par vo conseil non" (245).

M 101. Arthur tells Merlin to pick out for him the best fifty knights of the kingdom to fill up the Round Table.

HM II, 64-65. Merlin tells Arthur to do this, emphasizing the nicety and importance of the selection. Arthur replies that Merlin knows the knights better, and should make the choice in his place.

This same impression of energy and competence on Arthur's part is contributed to by three more variants, two occurring in Book V, drawn from MT where Arthur is already a more heroic figure than in the Merlin versions.

M 122. Arthur reorganizes his men, and attacks and defeats the army of the five kings.

HM II, 165-66. While Arthur is on the other side of the river, where he fled on the first defeat, his men rally and win the victory.

M 170. Gawain sends to Arthur for help, but before he can leave camp the battle is won.

MT 45. Gawain and his men simply come in with the news of their victory.

VM 433-34. The entire narrative is dissimilar.

M 171-72. Arthur's men have been away so long fighting the Roman ambush that he comes to assist them, arriving on the field of battle to find them victorious.

MT 56. Arthur remains in camp, Cador coming to him and reporting the victory.

VM 436-37. On Merlin's advice, Arthur sends reinforcements who win the battle. There is no scene afterward, as in M and MT.

In Books XVIII-XXI, where Arthur next becomes an active character, the sources make him dominate the story and there is no need for alterations of the sort just listed - although even here Arthur is made to appear a stronger ruler by the changes which cause him to act, not according to the vacillation of his emotions, but steadily and firmly in the interests of justice.

The emphasis on this ideal kingly trait of justice begins in the early Books. Arthur is made fair to his subjects and magnanimous to his enemies.

M 44. Arthur is sworn to be a true king and enforce justice. After he has been crowned and received homage, his first act is to satisfy the suppliants complaining of wrongs done to them since the death of Uther.

HM I, 144-46. The barons test Arthur and find him wise and generous. He is sworn to protect holy church and to enforce justice. But there is no episode of his righting the wrongs of suppliants.

M 118. (The last lines of Book III) Arthur establishes his knights, giving lands to the poor ones. He adjures them to be just, merciful, serviceable to women, and so forth. They have to swear this, and repeat the oath each Pentecost.

HM II, 139. No source.

M 127. Arthur is reluctant to fight as the champion of the evil brother against the good, but agrees to undertake the battle provided he and his fellow-prisoners are freed.

HM II, 184-85. Before the damsel has formally told him of his alternative of fighting or remaining in prison, Arthur learns from the others that they would rather lie in the dungeon than "faire desloiauté". Arthur says he will fight, and rebukes them for cowardice. - 187, as a matter of bargaining, he accepts the battle on condition the others are freed.

M 134. After he has won the battle for the evil brother and saved his own life, Arthur assumes his royal dignity, punishes the evil brother, and rewards the good one.

HM II, 211. Arthur is still unknown to the company, but at a hint from the officials of the fight, who have learned his identity, the two brothers are reconciled. The account is short, with no hint of a just settlement of their differences.

At the beginning of Book V, Malory seems to have had two versions of Arthur's character before him, and to have chosen the nobler one, enhancing it a little.

M 160-61, VM 425. Although some of the young knights wish to attack the Roman ambassadors, Arthur treats them honorably.

MT 4-6. Arthur glares at the senator and messengers with so ferocious an expression that they quail before him. Then he delivers them to Kay to entertain.

M 162. Arthur has Sir Cadore "conueye" the ambassadors out of the land.

MT 14-15. He threatens the senator that if he is not out of the kingdom in a week he will have him hanged, drawn by horses, and hung up for dogs to eat. Apparently without any command, "Sir Cadore, be curtayes," told the Romans the roads and "cunvayede" them part of the way.

VM 426. Arthur treats the Romans honorably on their de-

parture, giving them rich presents.

And again we have:

M 182. On the way back to England, Arthur orders his men not to take provisions without paying for them.

MT 105-6. There is no such command on Arthur's forced march back against Mordred (though similar restraint of his troops appears elsewhere and is reproduced in M: MT 91, M 121, on taking a city, Arthur forbids the molesting of women).

It must be admitted, however, that this conception of Arthur as a just king is not strong enough to keep Malory from reproducing from his source the story that Arthur, in the hope of destroying the fatal offspring of his incest, attempted to kill all the children born on Mayday. The account, though, is compressed and glossed over,¹ and a reference to the episode as a cause of Lot's hostility to Arthur is omitted.²

More emphatic in its consistent divergence from the sources is Arthur's ideal justice, in M, in dealing with the charges of poisoning and adultery against Guenevere. The idea is not entirely strange to the sources. Indeed, some examples of it are omitted from the Morte Darthur:

M 729-30. Absent.

MA 254 (ma 72), MH 29. It is stated that Arthur, who thinks Guenevere guilty of the poisoning, cannot deny Mador justice. (1¹ III, 128d-29b, should agree, but its text is corrupt.)

M 731-32, MH 38. The entire scene is absent.

MA 265 (ma 86-87). Arthur and Guenevere sit together, despondent over the fact that no champion can be found for her against Mador. Arthur expresses his love for her.

1¹ III, 132cd. With the rest of the passage following MA closely, Arthur adds, "Mais il fault que iustice soit accomplye."

M 750-51. The account of Gawain's telling Arthur about Elaine is very brief.

MA 219-20 (ma 23-25; 1¹ III, 120bc). There is a long conversation, in which Gawain and Arthur discuss Agravaine's charge (which in M has been suppressed) against Lancelot and Guenevere. Arthur declares, "Se tous li mondes le me disoit & iou ne men aperceuoie miez que iou ne men sui aperceus : si

¹ M 75. HM I, 203-13.

² M 86. HM I, 246-48.

nel querroie iou pas."

MH 20-21. There is no such scene.

But these touches could have provided Malory with only the barest of hints for the series of changes by which Arthur is transformed from a jealous and suspicious husband - easily crediting accusations against Guenevere and threatening a terrible vengeance, and then as easily being convinced of her innocence - to a truly just king who weighs each charge carefully and rejects those based on insufficient evidence; but when he has finally been given unquestionable proof, dispassionately passes legal sentence on his queen.

In Book XVIII, the unsuccessful accusations of adultery against Guenevere are suppressed in M. (They are for the most part absent from MH as well, but since it is in general far from M in this portion of the story, any connection is doubtful.)

M 738. Absent. (The Queen stays behind voluntarily.)

MA 205-6 (ma 4-5; 1^l III, 116bc). Agravaïne accuses Lancelot to Arthur, who dismisses the idea, but later decides to order the Queen to stay behind for a test.

MH 2-3. Agravaïne makes no accusation, and the Queen's stay is voluntary. (But as in MA, Agravaïne stays behind to spy on her.)

M 750-51. The question of Lancelot's love for the Queen is never brought up in the conversations of Gawain and Arthur about Elaine.

MA 219-20 (ma 23-25; 1^l III, 120bc). The main point of their discussions is Agravaïne's charge, and whether Lancelot's supposed affair with the Maid of Astolat disproves it.

MH 20-21. There are no such conversations.

M 754, MH 17. Absent.

MA 234-42 (ma 45-54; 1^l III, 124d-26d). Arthur stops at the castle of Morgan, who shows him the pictures of his love with Guenevere which Lancelot painted on the walls. Arthur is now convinced that Agravaïne was right, and vows a terrible vengeance.

(The episode of Lancelot's painting these pictures comes in the Lancelot immediately after one of the stories of Book VI, but it is not told there: M 199. L V, 215-23; 1^l II, 121d-24a; 1² F 2c-5a.)

M 759, MH 23. Arthur is at court when Lancelot arrives.

MA 247-48 (ma 62; 1^l III, 128cd). Arthur comes home from Morgan's castle to find that Lancelot has been at court dur-

ing his absence, but made only a short stay. This almost overcomes the suspicions aroused by Morgan, but not entirely.

The only charge levelled against Guenevere at this point in Malory's narrative is the false one of the poisoning of Mador's kinsman. In his handling of the case, Arthur is made to acquit himself much more honorably than he does in the sources. He is at once determined to execute justice, and yet not unreasonably suspicious of the Queen.

M 729. Mador is present at the fatal dinner, and makes his accusation against the Queen at once.

MA 248-50 (ma 63-65; 1^l III, 128d-29a), MH 28. He is not present, and his kinsman is buried with an inscription on his tomb that Guenevere killed him. No action, it seems, would ever have been taken against the Queen. But later Mador comes to court, reads the inscription, and complains.

M 729-30. At Mador's appeal, Arthur feels sure (very reasonably) that Guenevere did not deliberately poison the knight: "For as I deme this dede came neuer by her." But he will do his duty and let the case go to trial by combat.

MA 249 (ma 64; 1^l III, 128d-29a). Arthur very strongly suspects Guenevere's guilt. - 254 (ma 72),¹ he is sure of it: "Li rois estoit moult dolans de cel appel a ce quil ne puet ueer a faire droit al cheualier . Et li drois dira tot apertement le destruxion de la roine & lescil de li." So he calls the Queen to trial.

MH 29. Arthur apparently thinks the Queen guilty, since it is stated (as in MA) that he cannot be against the right.

M 730-31. At Mador's appeal, Arthur berates Guenevere for not keeping Lancelot on her side, but suggests that she try Bors.

MA 255 (ma 72-73; 1^l III, 129b). Somewhat sternly, he leaves her to find her own defender, if possible.

MH 29. The action is like that of MA, but Arthur's feelings are not indicated.

M 731-32. Arthur breaks in on the interview of Bors and the Queen, helping win Bors over by asserting, "I am now in certayne she is vntruly defamed."

MA 264-65 (ma 86-87; 1^l III, 132cd). After Guenevere's appeal to Bors has failed, Arthur goes with her to appeal to Gawain and other knights. But he cannot assure them that they will be fighting in a good cause, and they refuse.

MH 38. The same vain appeals are made as in MA, but no information is supplied as to Arthur's convictions.

Then comes a series of accusations of adultery in which

¹ 1^l III, 129b. The text is much compressed, producing the statement that the Queen knew Mador was in the right.

Arthur is at length convinced of Guenevere's guilt, and then acts to punish her, moved by legal principles and not by jealousy.

M 786. The battle against Melliagrance at court is to be over the charge of Guenevere's adultery with one of the wounded knights. Arthur is convinced of her innocence, since he has consulted the knights and each, if well, would be glad to undertake the combat.

L IV, 222, 224 ff. (1^l II, 17c, 18a ff.; C 218-21, 238 ff.). The charge of adultery with the wounded Kay is fought out in Gorre, Arthur apparently never hearing of it. The battle at court is for the possession of Guenevere, whom Meleagant originally conquered from Kay.

M 798-99. At Agravaine's accusation, Arthur refuses to think ill of Lancelot except on evidence. As the French Book says, he loves Lancelot and stifles his "demyng" that Agravaine might be right.

MH 51, MA 270-71 (ma 93-95; 1^l III, 134ab). Arthur believes the accusation at once, and desires revenge.

M 798-99. Arthur realizes that Lancelot will be able to defeat any accuser, so that a mere accusation will only stir up trouble in the realm. Accordingly, he will hear no charges unless Lancelot can be caught in flagrante. The trap is at Agravaine's initiative.

MH 51. Arthur's feelings are not detailed. He asks his nephews at once how they can catch Lancelot.

MA 272 (ma 96; 1^l III, 134c). Leaving his nephews, Arthur meditates on the situation and realizes the ruin that would come to the realm from having Lancelot killed. But he feels that he must avenge his shame, and so sends for his nephews to provide him with a plan for catching Lancelot.

M 808-9. When Guenevere has been found with Lancelot in her rooms, Arthur appreciates that having her executed will bring trouble with Lancelot, and ruin to the Round Table. But he will not allow the case to be settled through a trial by combat, which Lancelot could easily win. He insists, "She shall haue the lawe."

MH 56-57. These considerations are absent. Arthur shows anger against Lancelot.

MA 278 (ma 105-6; 1^l III, 136b). Arthur shows nothing but unthinking rage: "Il se uengera a la roinne en tel maniere que il en sera parle a toz iorz mes." Only the legal scruples of King Yon keep him from having Guenevere sentenced that very day.

As ideally royal as his justice, and possessing a more individual quality as well, is Arthur's love for his good knights, and particularly his sorrow at the breaking up of the Round Table. This conception is found fully developed in the Queste, in passages reproduced by Malory.

M 618-19, Q 11-12 (q¹ 524cd, q² 13). Arthur tells his knights he wishes them to hold a last tournament, because they will never be together again (although his real motive is to test the prowess of Galahad, who, he feels sure, will never return).

M 620-23, Q 14-20 (q¹ 525b-26c, q² 16-25). Arthur reproaches Gawain for his rash vow to seek the Grail, and grieve because the Quest will bring about the loss of so many of the knights he loves.

But in M this affection for his knights is also made to appear, without source authority,¹ throughout Arthur's career.

M 99. Merlin reports to Arthur the death of Balin and Balan. "Allas said kyng Arthur / this is the grettest pyte that ouer I herde telle of two knyghtes / for in the world I knowe not suche two knyghtes."

HM II, 60. No source.

M 171-72. Arthur arrives on the field of battle and embraces his victorious knights one by one, declaring, "There was neuer kyng sauf my self that had so noble knyghtes."

MT 56, VM 436-37. No source.

M 172. Arthur is only sorry that his knights persisted in fighting against odds: "Your courage had nere hand destroyed yow."

MT 57. On hearing the news of the battle and its heavy casualties from Cador, the commander, Arthur "wrythes, and wepede." He angrily rebukes Cador:

"Sir Cador, thi corage confunde us alle!

Kowardely thow castez owtte all my beste knyghttez." He is only with difficulty mollified.

VM 436-37. There is no scene of Arthur learning about the battle.

M 808-9. In deciding on punishing Guenevere, Arthur is concerned for the destruction of the Round Table which this course will bring about.

MH 56-57, MA 278 (ma 105-6; l¹ III, 136b). His only thought is for vengeance.

M 811-12. After Lancelot has rescued Guenevere from the fire, Arthur grieves not only for the death of Gareth and Gaheris, but also, and much more, for the destruction and breaking up of the Round Table. "Wete yow well my herte was neuer soo heuy as it is now / and moche more I am soryer for my good knyghtes losse / than for the losse of my fayre quene /

¹ One possible hint, outside of Q, for Malory's conception, may exist at MA 224 (ma 31): When Bors and the rest of Lancelot's kindred ask permission to leave court, "li rois lor doune moult a enuis . Car moult les ama a auoir entor lui." l¹ III, 121d, modifies the text: "Car moult les aymoît et especiallement Boort." M 751-52 does not reproduce the passage.

for quenes I myghte haue ynowe / but suche a felaushyp of good knyghtes shalle neuer be to gyders in no company."

MH 58. There is a very brief suggestion for Arthur's attitude in M:

"Suche knyghtys as there ar slayne

In All thys worlde there is no mo."

MA 285-90 (ma 114-20; 1^l III, 137d-38c). Arthur indulges in several long and violent laments, but they are only for his nephews as such.

M 846-47. In the last battle, Arthur looks around and observes the slaughter of his knights. Then he sees "that traytour Syr mordred that hath caused alle thys meschyef," and feels that he should kill him. Lucan and Bedevere urge that he ought not to endanger himself, but should wait for Lancelot. Arthur replies that he will never have a better chance to destroy the villain, and proceeds to attack him.

MH 103. Nothing very similar to M appears in a highly condensed account. Arthur's only words are:

"Shall we not brynge thys theffe to ground?"

MA 376 (ma 243; 1^l III, 158b). Arthur's motive is the desire to revenge on Mordred the death of Sagramore, whom he has just killed. There are no objections by Arthur's followers, no unselfishness on his part. He says in a soliloquy that either he or Mordred must die on the spot.

Thus Malory's Arthur dies as he has lived - a just, unselfish, strong ruler, and father of his people, his virtues far outweighing his one weakness of undue partiality to his nephew Gawain. This character of Arthur is built up by the greatest number of changes devoted to any personage except Lancelot, and in its contrast to the picture provided by the sources, of a somewhat ineffectual, fiercely passionate monarch, it presents the greatest originality in characterization which can be attributed to Malory.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

The demonstration that the variants which have been analyzed in the preceding chapters are the result of an effort at characterization on Malory's part is primarily a matter, not of argument, but of the mute evidence of the existence of such a large body of variants possessing such similarity of apparent purpose amid great differences of person, circumstances, and source. This purpose of characterization appears in the treatment of both major and minor characters in the Morte Darthur, in the motivation of action, and in the partial individualization of background figures by the use of proper names. The changes producing these different varieties of characterization can be found in all portions of the Morte Darthur, and the chains of closely related variants consistently extend across the boundaries where Malory changes from one source to another. Individual instances may have been wrongly included in the lists, but that the phenomena as a whole can be the result of anything but deliberate characterization by Malory is practically inconceivable.

Considering this point as established, one can formulate certain other generalizations as to the nature of the characterization which Malory was interested in, and as to the motives which inspired him. In general, Malory shows less concern with individuality of character than with motivation and consistency. If a character possesses a name, if he possesses the broad typical traits of a good knight, or of a hermit, or of a king, that

must usually be sufficient, in the Morte Darthur, to mark him off from his fellows. Minor personal peculiarities, such as Gareth's size, and Gawain's taste for apples and pears, are unimportant rarities.

Conversely, the evidence of the variants shows Malory devoting a great deal of attention to providing a character foundation for the events of the source story, and to harmonizing different source conceptions of the same characters - both procedures having at bottom an identical motive: the desire to introduce into the story greater homogeneity, from the point of view of character, than its sources possessed. This approach to the problem of characterization is what might have been expected, not only from Malory's position in a period when characterization was of no great importance in literature, but from certain personal traits of his own, indicated in passing in the preceding chapters, as well.

As appears from Malory's anticipations of the naming of his characters, and from his use of names found only in outside romances or later on in his own sources, as well as from the generally prophetic character of his treatment of, say, Gawain and Gareth, Malory must, before translating a sentence of the Morte Darthur, have been extremely familiar with the whole body of Arthurian story. To an author so equipped, and setting out to write a book detailing the entire life of Arthur and his knights, it must have been obvious that the traditional personages did not act like the same people at different times. If this author was interested in personalities, as Malory's remarkable memory for the names of the most trivial figures shows that he was, he must have formed in his mind a sort of composite picture of each important person, have acquired some sort of an idea of the kind of man he

must have been to have acted as the stories recounted.

Such conceptions, in fact, appear to have provided the basis of Malory's method of characterization. He is attempting to weave back into the story, by means of minor changes, a picture of a character which is fundamentally derived from the sources of the story themselves. By this means, so far as Malory's changes are numerous enough to be successful, the action of the story is motivated, the inconsistencies of characterization, as between sources or even within the same source, are smoothed out, and minor hints of character to be found in the sources are expanded until they achieve a new importance.

To go further behind Malory's methods, to ask why he was at all interested in personality, and capable of giving it literary treatment, is largely futile. To the extent that his interest is on the side of motivation, it can be seen to be associated with a generally realistic cast of mind which demanded, as can be seen from the treatment of the love of Tristram and Isoud, that a story depend upon some understandable basis of ordinary humanity, and not upon the fine-drawn motives of courtly tradition. Once Malory approached the Arthurian story critically from this realistic point of view, he could of course have drawn upon an actual knowledge of human nature to assist in the reconstruction of the characterization of his sources.¹ At times he seems to have been influenced by ideal type ideas, as of true knighthood in the cases of Lancelot and Dinadan, or of true kingship in that of Arthur.

¹ The suggestion of a human source for the character of Baudewyn of Bretayne in Book XVIII has already been noted. In an article to appear in PMLA. (see, for the present, the notice in the Proceedings, PMLA., XLVI (1931), 1428), Mrs. Nellie S. Aurner claims that details in the characterization of Arthur are derived from the lives of contemporary kings. Other such suggestions, for the most part impossible of verification, have from time to time been advanced.

In the main, however, Malory's interest in characterization seems to have been purely literary, and a matter of practice rather than of artistic theory. Without disturbing any more than was necessary the source story which it was his primary function to translate, he wished to keep straight the numerous characters of that story, to motivate its action (particularly the final tragedy), to smooth out the inconsistencies of its characterization, and to develop characters based largely on its hints. He was improving slightly upon the old, not recreating it. Yet even under the restraints of this limited and half patchwork method he was able to introduce many admirable and effective touches of characterization, while the interest in character which caused him to take such pains constitutes an important element in his literary personality.

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